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(2 vols. in 1)



THE

CITY OF THE CZAR;

OR, A

VISIT TO ST. PETERSBURG,

IN

THE WINTER OF 1829-30.

BY THOMAS RAIKES, ESQ.

A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
And faith he'll prent 'em. BURNS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

THE power of Russia is becoming daily an object of such importance in the world, that it is remarkable so little has been written of the system and manners of a country which differs so essentially from all the civilized states in Europe.

In proportion as this power has of late increased, it has begun to clash with the real interests of Great Britain. The following remarks on the construction of that power, and of its objects, mixed up with a view of society and manners at St. Petersburg, may therefore afford both information and amusement to the reader.

THE AUTHOR.

AUGUST, 1838.

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THE
CITY OF THE CZAR.

LETTER I.

Embarkation.—Miseries of a Steam-boat.—An entertaining Companion.—Napolean and the Imperial Armies.—Stormy Passage.

On board the W. Jolliffe Steamer,
8th November, 1829.

MY DEAR —,

I WOULD defy the wand of Harlequin to effect a greater change of scene than I have experienced in one short hour. At twelve o'clock last night I quitted a well-known resort of convivial gaiety, where all the luxuries of a London life are combined, with an unsparing hand, to suit the tastes of the most fastidious, and at one in the morning I found myself in a dirty cabin, where the glimmer of one flickering lamp just served to render visible three or four camp-stools, a range of

musty cradles in the wall, and 'half a dozen German Jews, who were to be my inevitable and inseparable companions at bed and board for six whole mortal days and nights at the least. This disheartening scene was not improved when, in a few minutes after my arrival, the anchor was weighed, and the hammering din of a rickety steam-engine informed us that we were proceeding down the river on our voyage.

The steam-boats on this station are nearly worn out, and miserably provided with every thing that could contribute to comfort: while the season has become of late so stormy in the North Sea, that this was destined to be the last voyage of the William Jolliffe for the year;—no very pleasant information to receive after we were finally embarked.

The night was dark, and we made our way between the coasts of Kent and Essex, without being able to give one parting look to those scenes of fertility and verdure which we never could see again till we returned to the English shores. I fell asleep on a horse-hair sofa, nautically termed a bed, when Fancy drew a veil over the dirty cabin, and transported me back for a few hours to more agreeable objects in the parish of St. James's.

When I went on deck this morning, we

had left Margate and Reculver behind us; the wide interminable ocean was in front, towards which we were rapidly advancing through the waves, while the bright blue sky was unobscured by a single cloud, save and except that black curling vapour which issued from the chimney of our vessel in successive volumes, marking our sooty track, and tainting the pure atmosphere behind us.

With all my respect for steam, and the innumerable advantages which I believe it is doomed in time to confer on the human race, I must persist in thinking the steam-boat a very unsightly object when compared with its more graceful rival—the ship under sail.

The Chinese, that people of old Lacque and Mandarin china, who, under a very grotesque exterior, are profound philosophers, and endowed with a very nice sense of propriety, have conceived a horror and antipathy for the steam-boat which nothing can conquer; they pretend that it is a most indecent and disgusting invention.

Without entering so far into their feelings, I think we may all allow that, if much has been gained in utility, much also has been lost in picturesque beauty and appearance. We may not be accused of overrating the

one, or disparaging the other, if we describe the sailing-ship as the symbol of poetry, and the steam-ship as the emblem of prose.

The first—with its spiry masts, its outspread sails, and flags of every hue, bounding gracefully on the wave like a gigantic swan, invoking the breeze from heaven (as it were a divine inspiration) to aid its course, while a silver foam sparkles round its taper flanks,—may represent a poem of Dante or Byron. Then the steam-boat, heavy and massive, like an enormous log; with its dark chimney, and its iron furnace, vomiting smoke; independent of the breeze, but mechanically propelled in its straightforward course; a sure and useful conveyance, of cheap access to all, but floundering through the waters like a drowning dog;—is it not a chapter of dull prose, from Blackstone or Adam Smith, which may impart much information, but little amusement?

Never was any prose so dull as this steam-packet; our time is passed from morning till night in conjugating the verb *ennuyer*. I read till my eyes ache; but when the cold dark evening compels me to quit the deck, and take refuge in the fetid cabin, no words can express the nausea of my position.

9th November.

We are now paddling through the deep at eight knots an hour;

“Quocunque aspicias, nihil est nisi pontus et aër;”

which is not a very cheerful prospect, when combined with a mizzling rain and a cold easterly wind.

Sitting on deck, I was suddenly surprised by the apparition of a man who, I supposed, must have fallen from the sky, as, during the two days we have been shut up in this prison, no one had seen him. He was one of the first arrivals on board, and immediately retreated to bed, in anticipation of the sickness which he expected. That *operation* performed, he came out like a giant refreshed; and proved to be a very entertaining Frenchman, full of anecdote, with whom I soon made acquaintance. It is evident that he is no friend of the Bourbons, and still clings to the recollection of his Emperor, under whom he served in many campaigns: he makes out that Charles X. is very unpopular in France, on account of his bigoted feelings; but he could not deny that the country itself was in a state of unexampled prosperity.

The soldiers of the old army will never

cease to regret a Chief who told every private in the ranks that he might find the *bâton de maréchal dans son sac*, and offered them the plunder of all Europe. My new acquaintance told me a trait of Napoleon, which he had witnessed himself, and was very characteristic of the influence which he possessed over the French soldier.

On the morning of the battle of Leipzig, Napoleon advanced to harangue the whole line; he addressed himself first, through an interpreter, to the Saxon and German auxiliaries, (who still remained with him,) in a long speech, calculated to excite their ardour and animate their courage. It had evidently no effect; they listened without interest or attention. Nettled at his want of success, he galloped up to the French line in very ill-humour, and said in a caustic tone, "Français! je n'ai rien à vous dire: vous avez juré de vaincre ou de mourir; faites votre devoir!" And the whole air resounded with cries of *Vive l'Empereur!*

This story drew the Frenchman into some very unqualified abuse of the foreign powers, who had not only deserted Napoleon in his reverses, but had turned their arms against him and conspired his downfall. Upon which a little Prussian Jew, seated near us

on the capstan, took fire, and treated the great Emperor with very little ceremony. His family, it appeared, had been ruined by the French occupation of Berlin; and he went so far as to call the imperial armies a set of robbers and plunderers.

High words ensued, and the captain with myself had some difficulty in restoring peace on deck; but during the rest of the voyage, whenever the Frenchman met his antagonist, he made a low bow, and affecting to address him with the usual German salutation, "*Gehorsamer diener!*" which means "obedient servant," he muttered with a leer, "*Cochon à l'or—dinaire!*" but so intelligibly to me, whom he had initiated into his secret, that I could not refrain from laughing.

Our voyage is nearly at an end, but not our danger. After a stormy passage, in which the action of the engine seemed to strain every beam of the vessel as if she was hourly going to pieces, amidst sickness and noise which precluded all chance of sleep, we are now opposite to Cuxhaven, lying at anchor between two sandbanks during a boisterous night, with the certainty, if we part from our cables, to meet with that grave which has engulfed so many vessels on this coast.

I have written to our friend —, who accompanied Lord — on his mission to Petersburg, requesting he would send me a letter of introduction to one of those numerous friends who received him with so much kindness and hospitality during his stay in that capital, and of which he has related to us so many examples. As there is nothing to induce me to tarry long in Hamburg, I shall make the best of my way to Berlin as soon as my baggage is landed, and I have bought the necessary furs for my northern journey.

Adieu !

LETTER II.

Hamburg.—The Ramparts.—Stupendous Bridge.—Costume of the Women.—Berlin.—Political feeling.—German Opera.—Royal family.—Decay of Splendour.

Berlin, 18th November, 1829.

MY DEAR —,

I KNOW not how to describe the progress of our steam-boat to Hamburg: I cannot say, as formerly, we sailed up the Elbe, or we rowed up the Elbe; the only appropriate term I can find is, we paddled up the Elbe at a boiling rate, though a severe frost had set in, and the banks were covered with snow. I found a good inn, (the Hôtel de Russie,) on the Jungfernstieg, with a tolerable dinner, in which the *sauer kraut*, and the stewed prunes, were, as usual, not omitted. The town of Hamburg is much altered since my last visit; and the rage for building has been as prevalent there as in Paris or London, without entailing the same ruinous consequences

on the speculators. There are mansions which have cost from £20,000 to £30,000; and a plot of ground, not more than three acres, near the Jungfernstieg, sold lately for £14,000.

The ramparts which formerly protected this nest of commerce, and rendered it such a formidable fortress in the time of Napoleon, are now razed to the ground; and the space is laid out in public walks and plantations, which are a great ornament to the city. The French have left their traces, both good and bad, as usual: their severity and extortions under Bourrienne are still remembered with a shudder, and many a senator recollects the period when his head was security for the payment of the contributions. The wonderful wooden bridge which they built from Hamburg over the Elbe to Harburg, in the Hanoverian territory, extended for a space of ten English miles, and was a master-piece of labour and ingenuity. The materials were supplied by a *forcible appeal* to all the timber-merchants there and in the neighbouring towns, most of whom were ruined by this arbitrary act. When once accomplished, this stupendous work became a real benefit to the country, and ought to have been kept up; but though the Hamburgers offered to

contribute half the expense, they found no corresponding disposition in the Hanoverian government to assist the common object, and fifteen years of neglect have almost destroyed every vestige of this gigantic undertaking. There is still a great air of opulence in the city; the trade of Hamburg, though not so extensive as during the late war, has flourished on the spoils of the British commerce; the harbour is full of ships, and the warehouses teem with goods, which supply the constant demand of the German consumer. Immense fortunes have been accumulated, and have survived the pressure of French exactions. Mr. M. J. Jenisch died a year ago, leaving three children, to each of whom he bequeathed a fortune of £400,000 sterling.

The dress of the women has been much improved by their French invaders, whose rearguard, wherever they settle, is quickly followed by a host of milliners and hairdressers, who finally make a more lasting impression on the natives than their military companions. Every other trace of their occupation has vanished; the great bridge is destroyed, the senate has resumed its lost dignity, and the burgher guard struts again with an air of importance: but the ladies retain

their French hats, their French robes, and await with anxiety the latest fashions from Paris; while the Hamburg grisette, who was formerly proud of her stuff petticoat and her gold-laced head-attire, now trips about the streets with a pretty *bonnet en tulle*, a black silk apron, and a well-made shoe, like her prototype in the Rue Vivienne. That moral influence over the civilized world, of which the French boast with so much pretension, "hath this extent, no more;" their mantua-makers and milliners are their only law-givers to Europe, but these it must be allowed are *supreme*:

"Elle se font introduire
"Où le plus fier tyran ne peut avoir d'empire."

I pursued my journey from thence to Berlin with as much speed as thirty-seven German miles of the most execrable roads would permit, and arrived here on Sunday morning. The inns are bad, but the town itself is wonderfully improved of late years in appearance: some magnificent public buildings have been erected; and, in walking up the *Linden*, the stranger's eye is attracted by two fine statues which a grateful country has dedicated to the memory of her brave defenders, Blucher and Bulow Dennewitz. For-

merly the bias of political feeling in Prussia was alternately French or English, but now the compass at Berlin points solely to the North; every thing here is Russian,—family alliances, diplomatic connexions, and, more perhaps than all, a community of past sufferings, avenged at last by one common triumph, have so completely united the interests of these two powers, that, if a war should occur in Europe, they must be inseparable. An army of 240,000 of the best disciplined troops in the world, with the reserve of the Landwehr, and a well-regulated system of finances, must rank Prussia amongst the first-rate European powers, and render her a formidable ally in the scale of Russia. There still remains a decided feeling of hatred to Austria, which time will never remove: as to England, they seem to consider us here as a *mere nullity*.

The late events in the East are trumpeted forth by the advocates of Russian influence as a fresh proof of her stupendous power. Why, then, did Diebitsh stop at Adrianople? Constantinople, that darling object of Russian ambition since the time of Catherine, must have been within his grasp. Perhaps, when I get to the fountain-head, I may learn something more of that mysterious affair. It

would not surprise me much if that power, which is here called a nullity, had interposed, and arrested the march of the conquerors.

There is a fine German Opera at Berlin; and a representation of Goethe's Faust was given last night on a very magnificent scale: it is far more impressive in the original language than in any translation; and the mystic scenes, in which it abounds, are well adapted to suit the legendary taste of the Germans.

The royal family live in great privacy; the king is growing old, and seems only to wish that a life which has been chequered by so many vicissitudes, may be closed in peace abroad, and tranquillity at home. There is little society or amusement to attract a stranger; the quiet streets, the scanty equipages, and the little movement which is seen, except here and there amongst the military, give to Berlin rather the air of a great provincial town with a numerous garrison, than the animated aspect of a great and busy capital. I have found an old friend in our English minister, Sir B— T—, who has not only given me a most kind and hospitable reception, but also a passport as courier, which will be of great use in procuring post-horses through the Russian dominions. Many years

have now elapsed since I was last at Berlin: I was then a young man of twenty, sent (as it was called in those days) on my travels; and, God knows, they were then very limited, as France and Italy were hermetically sealed up to every Englishman. We could go to Dresden, Vienna, and to the North Pole, if we pleased; but the grand tour, which formerly gave the *finishing touch* to an English education, was no longer practicable.

At that period Berlin was a very pleasant and hospitable residence: the court gave frequent receptions; the hotels of Princes Henry, the old Prince Ferdinand, and Prince Radzivil, were open every evening with cards and supper, where the best society was constantly assembled; independent of which there were numerous dinners and balls constantly given by the ministers and principal nobility, who were unremitting in their attentions to foreigners. The memory of Frederick the Great was then fresh in every one's recollection,—he was styled the captain of the age; another has since arisen, who not only eclipsed his fame, but nearly destroyed his monarchy.

I can see no traces of this former splendour in the dull capital which is now before my eyes; every thing bears the stamp of a

government chastened and sobered by adversity, which hardly dares to trust the duration of its returning prosperity.

Nations, in fact, are only *en gros* what individuals are *en detail*. I have seen many a man born to affluence, and overtaken by calamities, who, when Fortune afterwards restored her favours, received them with caution and distrust. A monarch, who has once seen a foreign invader dictate arbitrary terms of humiliation to him in his own palace, may well be convinced of the fallacy and uncertainty of all human grandeur. Such is Berlin at the present moment; but as we have lived to see the reign of anarchy, and then the thirst for unlimited conquest, successively extinguished in Europe, we may hope that peace and tranquillity are likely to be long preserved.

I shall write you again when I am farther advanced on my journey.

Yours ever,

LETTER III.

Departure from Berlin.—Severity of the Weather.—The Vistula.
Disastrous Ferries.—Marienburg.—Antique Castle.—Dreary
Road.—Königsberg.—Curious Publication.—Napoleon and his
Russian Campaign.—Memel.—Execrable Road.—Kositten.—
Perilous Situation.—Russian Frontiers.

Königsberg, 23d November, 1829.

MY DEAR —,

I LEFT Berlin, the day after I wrote to you, for Königsberg, and was agreeably surprised at finding a smooth macadamized road, with a row of poplars planted on each side, to mark the proper track when the ground is covered with snow.

The Northern bias of this government is visible in the pains and expense which have been lavished in thus facilitating the communication with Russia. While the other roads leading from this capital are left to their fate, these eighty German miles, more than equal to four hundred English, are as

level and as well kept up as the road to Newmarket. This work of modern civilization forms a striking contrast with the desolate and thinly inhabited tract of country through which it winds.

The weather was bitterly cold, the snow fell abundantly, and we soon had a flat white surface before us of great extent, on which the postillions could never have discerned the road for five minutes together, without the aid of these landmarks. As it was, we moved on rapidly night and day, always finding some tolerable refreshments at the post-houses; but meeting no travellers, except a wagon full of German Jews returning from the Francfort fair, till we arrived at Dreschau, on the banks of the Vistula, late on Friday evening.

Here then we were to pass that river which sealed the downfall of Napoleon, and here was the commencement of my difficulties. I lay down to sleep for a few hours; the frost was intense; and, when daylight appeared, the Vistula presented a mass of floating ice, which the boatmen seemed afraid to encounter. The carriage was already on board the prahm; no time was to be lost, and the inducement of a dollar turned the scale. We pushed off from the bank, and notwithstand-

ng all the efforts of the crew, were nearly carried down by the stream; we struggled for three hours against the combined elements of wind and water, till at last we defeated them both, and reached the opposite shore in safety.

We then travelled two German miles farther to Marienburg, where a repetition of the same contest awaited us on the Nogat, a branch of the same river, less broad, and consequently more choked up with ice. Here we were literally frozen up in the middle of the stream, with every prospect of remaining there till the whole river became solid, and we could walk to land; oars and poles were no longer of any use; a rope was fixed to the prahm, twelve stout horses were harnessed to the rope, and after much whipping, struggling, and swearing, a loud crash announced our liberation, and we were gradually towed into port, having spent a whole day at these two disastrous ferries.

I saw little of the town of Marienburg; the most conspicuous object in it is a large antique castle on the heights overlooking the river, which is fitted up as a palace, to receive the royal families of Russia and Prussia on their frequent journeys between Petersburg and Berlin.

On this dreary road there is really nothing worthy of notice; you feel an extraordinary impatience to arrive at the next post-house; and, when there, as great an impatience to quit it. In this manner we travelled on to Elbing, and from thence to Königsberg, where I put up at the Hôtel d'Allemagne, and without loss of time ordered a dinner and a bed, as from this point we have still a distance of eight hundred English miles to Petersburg. The diary of a traveller who is whirled so expeditiously through a very uninteresting country, cannot afford you much amusement.

In less than half a sheet I have carried you with me through four hundred miles, *ventre à terre*; we may, therefore, both stop to take breath: but how different are our two resting-places!

You have probably dined sumptuously at the table of that prince of good fellows —, and are at this hour cutting into a rubber of whist at White's, or amused with the jibes and jokes of sundry wags at Crocky's; while here am I in a dirty dreary room, after a solitary meal, half suffocated with the faint heat of a German stove, while the cold without is ten degrees below the freezing point.

My carriage is fortunately well stored with

books; among those which I picked up at Berlin is a curious publication, printed in 1787, called "Correspondence secrète, politique et littéraire," in which there are numberless laughable as well as interesting anecdotes of that period.

Take the following as the sample of the first:

"Deux dames sont allées aux petites maisons, Hôpital des Fous, la veille du tirage de notre fameuse Loterie Génoise, pour se faire choisir cinq numeros: le fou, à qui elles s'adressèrent, rêva avec beaucoup d'attention, écrivit effectivement cinq numeros sur un petit papier, le roula et puis l'avala, en disant, 'Mesdames, je puis vous assurer que ces cinq numeros sortiront demain.' "

Est-ce que ce petit fagot ne vous fera pas rire?

The writer quotes the following severe epitaph, made for Louis the Fifteenth:

"Cy git Louis le quinzième,
Du nom de Bien-aimé le deuxième:
Dieu nous préserve du troisième!"

There are only eighteen volumes of these *bêtises*, which are very amusing companions in a post-chaise.

Konigsberg is a considerable town, but the streets are narrow; there are some fine buildings, and a large regal palace, which is kept in repair, and furnished, but in the most simple manner, to receive the two royal families as they journey to and from Petersburg and Berlin.

Napoleon took up his quarters here in 1811, on commencing his Russian campaign; the bed in which he slept is still shown as a curiosity, though his memory is not treated with much respect. He was attended by a numerous suite of servants, carriages, and horses, far different from the wretched sledge on which he hurried back with Caulaincourt on the following year to his own dominions.

He told them here that he was going to seal the peace of Europe on the Russian territory; and his words were really verified, but not in the sense that he had contemplated.

There is an old waiter at this inn who religiously preserves a book, which he maintains that Bonaparte threw to him from his carriage, as he passed the gate of the town on the morning of his departure. It is a common French novel, printed in that year; and probably was one of the new publica-

tions of the day, which were constantly forwarded from Paris for his amusement. On reading the first few lines he saw that it was trash; and, with his usual impatience, tossed it out of the window: and thus it fell into the hands of the waiter, if the whole was not his own invention.

As there are certain penances to be performed by every traveller, I mounted to the top of a tower in the castle, which is three hundred and fifty feet high, commanding an extensive view of all the surrounding country; but, as hill and dale were covered with a thick sheet of snow, one object was hardly discernible from another. In summer it must be a magnificent prospect.

Memel, 25th November.

As the above was hardly worth the postage, though it may sound like an *Irishism*, I have brought it with me one hundred English miles farther, that I may send it you from hence; that is, one letter instead of two. The road from Königsberg was execrable, covered with snow, and winding through interminable forests of pine, which furnish a considerable object of exportation from hence to foreign countries. Six post-horses were

hardly sufficient to draw the carriage through ruts, and out of holes, which were almost impassable.

It was midnight, and very dark, when we arrived at Rositten, on the coast of the Baltic: if you look at the map, you will see that our road from thence lay for thirty miles on a neck of sand, bounded on one side by the ocean, on the other by a wide lake, called the *Curische Haf*. There is no guide for the postillions but the track of former wheels, which, in stormy weather, is soon effaced by the overflowings of the tide: thus we jog on in doubt and uncertainty, Scylla on one side, and Charybdis on the other.

I was fast asleep and unconscious of the localities, when my courier awoke me with the tidings that we had lost the track: I looked out and saw the wheels in the water, and the postillion recovering from a doze; while the carriage-lamps just gave sufficient light to show our danger, without affording any clew to avoid it. One of the postillions took a lamp, and, after riding over the sands for half-an-hour, at last hailed us with the signal that he had discovered the road, which we had lost by his own carelessness.

When we arrived here, I was informed

that a similar accident had occurred last year, but attended with very fatal circumstances. Mr. Muller, brother to the Danish consul, had the misfortune to lose his way on these very sands, from whence he was unable to escape: his carriage, four horses, and the postillion were ingulfed in a quicksand, and never seen again; he himself is supposed to have leaped out of the carriage when overtaken by the waves, where he found an instant death, as his body was some time afterwards discovered on the coast of Polangen, in the Russian territory, very far from the spot where the accident occurred.

You may thus see that a journey to the Hyperboreal capital is not quite so easy an affair as from London to Paris, independent of the distance and the climate. There is a good inn here, kept by an Englishman, at the sign of the *Sun*, to which we may bid adieu in good earnest, as I suppose we shall see little of the original for some months to come.

We are drawing very near to the frontiers of Russia: in a few hours even, my curiosity will be gratified with the sight of a country which has of late acquired a great influence in European politics, of which we have all

heard much, but are still very imperfectly acquainted with it. I will write to you again, either before or when I get to the end of my journey; that is, in a very few days.

Yours ever.

LETTER IV.

Polangen.—Military Inspectors.—Rigid Scrutiny.—Boor's Wedding.—Mittau.—French Innkeeper.—The Bourbons.—Riga.—Narva.—Dreary Scene.—Suburbs of Petersburg.—Russian Dexterity.

Mittau, 28th November, 1829.

MY DEAR —,

ON the 26th I entered the Russian territory at Polangen, through a triple line of barriers garnished with sentinels, at which you are required successively to produce your passport, though not ten furlongs distant from each other.

The baggage of every individual is searched here with great severity; books are particularly scrutinized, and if they relate to political subjects, generally confiscated, or, what is the same thing, detained for farther inspection.

Strangers, generally, seem objects of sus-

picion; books even still more, and why? Russia is a great and powerful nation, but she cannot pretend to place herself at the head of modern civilization; why, then, appear to shun a contact with her neighbours? why give to every traveller on his arrival the impression, (perhaps unfounded,) that she daily dreads intellectual improvement, or the influx of those opinions which, if her state is really sound, may be met with defiance or contempt? I am merely starting a question, without any right to give an opinion so early and on such trivial grounds: but one or two traits of inquisitorial authority in the military inspectors at Polangen seemed to indicate a greater vigilance as to political feelings and objects than I have been used to find in the custom-house departments of any other state in Europe. After all, it may be a false impression on my part, more owing to the zeal of the agents, than the injunctions of the authorities.

The roads from hence are kept in very good order; and posts are erected at every verst, to mark the distance from one station to another. New and comfortable houses for the post-masters were built, by order of the late Emperor, along the whole road to Petersburg; where, if you do not meet with luxuries,

you always find a warm room, and tolerable Russian fare.

At a place called Balsau, I came into the midst of a boor's wedding, which was celebrated with boisterous mirth and rejoicings: the bride was distinguished by a veil of white linen, and presented me with a pair of worsted gloves; I gave her a silver rouble in return, when, to my great surprise, she fell upon her knees and kissed my hand. The surrounding group of peasants had nothing intelligent or picturesque in their appearance; they were uncouth in their manners and clumsily shaped: the men wore long beards, generally of a reddish hue, and on their heads a cap of black lambskin; they seemed to be simple and inoffensive, but barbarous and ignorant.

The weather became milder as we advanced, though the thaw was not of long duration. The four post-horses were harnessed to the carriage abreast: they went at a hand-gallop all the way, and we got over eight or nine wersts every hour, which in due time brought us, without any accident or difficulty, to Mittau.

To find a good French cook in these regions was very unexpected; but the inn here

is kept by a Frenchman named Morel, who was formerly *chef* to Louis XVIII., and remained to establish himself here when the royal emigrants quitted their asylum in this town.

Morel is a character; he has seen a great deal of the world, and, like all his countrymen, is very communicative: but, if much of his time has been spent in the service of the Bourbons, he does not appear to have quitted them with any agreeable feelings or recollections. He related many anecdotes of their private life which are not worth repeating, as a discontented servant is not always the best authority: he had refused to follow them into France, and blamed severely the system which they had adopted since their return. What more particularly excited his astonishment was the bigotry of Charles X., which, he said, was little in accordance with his previous morality.

Morel was living with the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien at the time of his arrest at Strasbourg; who, as he asserted, received three successive warnings of the impending danger, which he neglected. The last, and most impressive, notice was given him by an unknown individual in the forest while he

was hunting, who urged him in the most solemn manner then not to return home: he slighted the advice, disdained all precautions, and that very night his house was surrounded by French troops, who led him to his doom.

Mittau is a neat town; and the palace, which was lent by the Emperor to Louis XVIII., is a spacious building; it was formerly the residence of the Dukes of Courland.

My next object was Riga, which is the second trading city in Russia; it is strongly fortified, and boasts of a large, active population: there is an air of affluence in the streets, well-dressed people and some good equipages, which attest that Riga flax and hemp meet with lucrative markets in Europe. I passed through Narva in the night,—that town of timber and deals, which was once taken by the Swedes, and held for a long period by them. When the Muscovites regained it in 1704, they sent all the inhabitants to Astracan, and peopled the town *de novo* from their own hordes, to ensure submission for the future.

I began this letter at Mittau, and have now finished my long journey; during which, since I passed the Russian frontier, I have not met three carriages on the road. A wide waste,

covered with snow, seemingly without inhabitants, without flocks, and without signs of cultivation, is the uniformly dreary scene which from hour to hour presents itself to the view of the traveller.

The last stage, from Strelna to the capital offers gradually a more animated picture; sledges are in motion, horses and carriages are passing to and fro, foot passengers become numerous, and all the signs of approach to a populous city break upon you by degrees, till at last, when we reached the suburbs, I had good reason to find them too much frequented. Some thieves cut off a trunk which was fastened behind the carriage, and, under cover of the night, made away with it as adroitly as any English depredators. Thus was I initiated at once into the experience of Russian dexterity.

When Peter the Great was advised by one of his ministers to expel the Jews from his dominions on account of their cunning and roguery, he replied, "Let them alone, my Russians are a match for them." I believe his imperial majesty had a profound knowledge of his subjects.

This letter may go to the post as it is, without any farther remarks: when I am reco-

vered from my fatigues, and have seen any thing here which may be worth relating, I will not fail to resume the correspondence; in the mean time, keep me *au fait* of what our friends are about in the bow-window, or elsewhere.

Yours ever.

LETTER V.

Petersburg.—Magnificent Buildings.—Inns.—Want of Accommodation.—Emperor Alexander.—His philanthropic views.—Accession of Nicholas.—Discontent of the Army.—Severity of the Climate.—A fruitful Source of Conversation.—Curious Aspect of the Streets.

Petersburg, 1st December, 1829.

MY DEAR ———,

HERE then am I arrived in this city of palaces planted in the middle of a desert! A Frenchman once exclaimed on the same occasion, “*Ville superbe, que fais-tu là?*” —and a stranger is almost tempted to believe that the wand of a magician could alone have conjured up such a magnificent pile of buildings in one of the most desolate and uninhabitable corners of the globe.

Art has been doomed to struggle here against all the obstacles which nature could

oppose to her success. This beautiful capital of the Russian empire is seated in a wilderness, founded on a marsh, and exposed to a climate which, during half the year, renders existence itself almost intolerable. Geographically placed at a point equally remote from the centre of civilization in Europe, and from that of barbarism in Asia, her maritime communications with the former have introduced all the arts and refinements of modern life, to a greater degree than her inland contact with the latter may have fostered the continuance of obsolete customs and ignorant prejudices. Petersburg may be ranked as a European capital, her sister Moscow is decidedly Asiatic.

One of the first inconveniences to which a stranger is exposed on his arrival here, is the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of finding any suitable accommodation at a public inn or hotel. Their number is very limited; three only are worthy of any notice,—Demuth's Hôtel de Paris, and Hôtel de Londres; but they are deficient in every comfort, all equally dirty, ill-furnished, and ill-attended.

It can only be imputed to the scanty number of foreigners who visit this part of the world, that so little anxiety is shown to pro-

vide them during their stay with those common *agrémens* of life which are now so generally diffused through every country in Europe: there is no encouragement for speculation where there is so little demand, and some innkeepers have already found to their cost that the custom of the natives is not always desirable.

A Frenchman, some time ago, hired a large hotel, and fitted it up with every accommodation for travellers who seldom made their appearance: other guests nearer home established themselves in his apartments, contracted debts which were easily evaded, and the man was ruined. No one has since been found willing to renew the enterprise on the same scale; and we, who are temporary sojourners in the land, are subject to many privations and annoyances which we have hitherto been little used to encounter.

The memory of the late Emperor Alexander is still deeply cherished by all who were able and willing to appreciate the excellent qualities which adorned his character. It is not too much to say, that he was a beneficent angel sent before his time.

Called as he was by circumstances which he never sought, but inevitable as the decree of Fate, to exercise a high and leading con-

trol in the affairs of Europe, it will be the task of history to show the firmness, the moderation, and the abstinence from all selfish objects, which he evinced when placed in that imposing attitude which changed the destinies of the world.

During his protracted stay in foreign countries, where the march of civilization and intellectual improvement had conferred such important benefits on the human species, his enlightened mind not only comprehended the value of their solitary laws and institutions, but silently formed the beneficent plan of gradually imparting the same advantages to the backward generations which owned his sway.

Having terminated his mission abroad by cementing a general peace, which has never since been disturbed, he returned home to his own dominions, completely absorbed in philanthropic views for the moral improvement of his subjects. In the fulness of his heart, he flattered himself with the hope of realizing by his own exertions, even to the steppes of Tartary, those smiling pictures of prosperity and content which had cheered his eye in the most civilized and enlightened countries of Europe. That he should have failed in accomplishing that which must be

the work of ages, is not surprising; but that a sovereign, actuated by such disinterested feelings, so earnestly intent on promoting the public welfare, should not only have met with headstrong opposition to his views, but have become himself the object of rancour and personal animosity, is a stain which can never be effaced from the Russian name. Such, however, was the fate of Alexander. His anxious efforts to reform abuses rooted in the soil, and ameliorate the degraded position of a numerous population, were met with sullen insensibility on the one side, and with fierce opposition on the other. The lower orders were impervious to the blessings he would have conferred upon them, and the higher orders were too seriously interested in the continuation of existing abuses not to meet all his attempts at reform with the most virulent hostility. He saw with pain and vexation of spirit all his schemes of public utility counteracted, all his efforts to promote the happiness of his people foiled, and himself, instead of being hailed the benefactor of his age, as he deserved, held up as the object of indiscriminate hatred to a junta of discontented spirits, who were ripe for any acts of violence in order to defeat his measures. Baffled and sick at heart, his

noble nature sunk at last under repeated disappointment. For more than a twelvemonth before his death, he kept aloof from his capital, or, when there, lived in complete retirement; rumours of plots and conspiracies were vaguely whispered in his ear, which only affected him as galling proofs of that perverse spirit which could so ill appreciate the wisdom and purity of his own intentions. Those frequent journeys to the Crimea were mere efforts to divert his thoughts, and prevent the mind, by change of scene, from pondering on the gloomy visions which hourly assailed him. Disgusted with mankind, he became disgusted with life itself. In his last tour to the provinces, when he arrived at Tagonrod, he was seized with an attack of bilious fever, which from the first assumed an alarming character; while his constitution, weakened by mental sufferings, was little able to resist the progress of a disease which soon terminated his valuable existence. Far from repining at his premature fate, he hailed the approach of death with inward satisfaction; no entreaties could induce him to take any internal medicine; local applications were used by his physicians, but with little effect: he himself re-

fused to contribute to his cure ; and quitted, without one sigh of regret, a scene of worldly grandeur and pre-eminence which had lost all value in his estimation.

Such was the cruel end of Alexander, a few years after we had seen him in England, crowned with victory, and loaded with every gift which Fortune could lavish on her most favoured child.

Those extensive conspiracies, the apprehension of which destroyed the happiness, and shortened the days of his brother, broke forth into acts of open mutiny and sedition on the accession of Nicholas to the throne. His firmness of character and personal bravery awed them into silence ; but there was a fearful moment at that period, when the tranquillity of the whole empire was most seriously endangered.

I shall, by degrees, learn more details on this interesting subject ; but every thing proves that the plans of the conspirators were deeply laid, and the fidelity of the army compromised to an alarming extent. From that hour was decided the war with Turkey, which has served to occupy and sooth the public mind with bulletins of success, and, at the same time, give active employment to

those mutinous regiments whose leisure in time of peace had been directed to such sinister purposes.

Even now that a campaign of two years has thinned the ranks of the army, and at last realized by unexpected success the dreams of conquest so long entertained by the Empress Catherine, it is evident that a feeling of discontent prevails here, on account of the moderate advantage which has been derived from the late victories.

The nation, in fact, is founded on military principles; it wants conquest, plunder, and excitement abroad, while the government wishes for peace, tranquillity, and reformation at home.

A climate like this, which not only affects the comfort, but also frequently the lives of individuals, may well be considered an object of daily interest: the variations of the thermometer are watched with constant anxiety, and prove a general topic of conversation in all circles. Unlike our commonplace remarks on the weather, of rain or sunshine, the degrees of frost here are calculated with the greatest precision; Reaumur is cited on one side, Fahrenheit on the other: the rise or fall of a hair's breadth in the quick-

silver will create a discussion for half an hour; and it seems almost a charitable dispensation of Providence, that, in a country where the inexhaustible subject of politics is not only avoided but forbidden, another topic of more immediate interest should be found, equally abundant and subject to still greater variations.

Public thermometers are placed in the streets, to give that notice of approaching danger which the human frame may not immediately perceive; as the change is sometimes so rapid, that you are caught by the frost before you can be aware of it.

When the frost is at or near thirty degrees, all the public places of amusement are closed. During a more moderate cold, large bonfires are lighted near the principal theatre for the preservation of coachmen and servants; but a rigorous winter seldom occurs without instances of these poor people being frozen to death in the streets. Notwithstanding the severity of the climate, there is no capital in Europe where horses and servants are kept so long waiting for their masters in the open air.

The point in which a foreigner is most liable to attack, if he ventures to walk abroad,

is the nose, which becomes of a livid whiteness, without pain: if care is taken to rub the part affected immediately with snow, or even a piece of flannel, which renews the circulation, a cure is easily effected. After all, however, with due precaution, we suffer perhaps less from cold in this country than in milder climates. The houses are thoroughly warmed by stoves; all are fitted up with double casements; and the use of furs is so general when you go out, that the weather has little or no effect on the person.

The streets of Petersburg present a curious aspect, particularly the Perspective, which, like our Regent Street, is the principal thoroughfare. Here are to be seen carriages (all with four horses,) drotchkas, sledges, carts, wagons, mingled together, on a slippery surface of beaten snow, without interfering with each other, though many of them are driven with great rapidity: coachmen with beards in the Tartar dress, footmen in laced liveries, chasseurs in rich uniforms, and peasants in sheep-skins, all blended in a moving mass, form a singular contrast to each other, and diversify the scene. Proceed a little farther, and you find yourself in the midst of markets filled with frozen pro-

visions, fish, and vegetables, all as hard as a stone, and chopped with a hatchet. Here the march of corruption is stopped; the sheep which was killed a month ago will be fresh a month hence; and the fish, which has been brought from the Volga might travel another thousand wersts without losing its delicate flavour.

In every direction stately buildings and magnificent palaces meet the eye, till you approach the banks of the Neva, which presents one solid mass of ice, traversed in all parts by sledges, and planted with shrubberies of pine-trees, which form a very novel and agreeable picture.

Last night, at the French theatre, one of the actors introduced into his part an allusion to this scene, in the shape of a calembourg, which was honoured with an imperial smile: "Pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne pourroit jamais mourir de faim à Petersbourg?—Parce qu'on est sûr de trouver des petits pains (pins) sur le Neva." After this, I think you may probably wish me to finish my letter.

Ever yours.

LETTER VI.

Churches in Petersburg.—Tomb of Kutusoff.—Choristers.—Splendid Tombs of the Nobility.—Paintings.—Residence of the Archimandrite.—Splendour of the Tauride Palace.—Mining College.—Academy of Arts.—General Education.—The Empress Catherine and her Court.

Petersburg, 6th December, 1829.

My DEAR —,

I HAVE been occupied yesterday in visiting the two principal churches in Petersburg, the Casan church and that of St. Alexander Newsky: both are built of brick, covered with white stucco, as indeed are all the magnificent structures here, except the marble palace, and a few others. The exterior of the former is singularly graceful; the design is Grecian, and a range of arcades on each side, in semicircular form, embrace a wide

area in front, which gives full scope to admire the symmetry of the architecture. The interior is adorned with superb and polished columns of granite; there is a profusion of gilding and pictures on the walls; reliques, which are preserved with great care, and valuable presents, which attest the liberality of the givers.

Here is the tomb of Field-marshal Kutusoff, on which a lamp is kept burning night and day. Around are hung the various tattered colours taken in the wars of 1812 and 1813, among which are conspicuous several of Napoleon's eagles; the keys, also, of various fortresses captured by the Russian arms; but some, no longer in their possession, are still exhibited with the same ostentation.

Organs are not permitted by the Greek rites; the music performed in the Russian churches is only vocal, but great care is taken in the selection and instruction of the singers. They are concealed in great numbers behind a screen, which, I think, in a church considerably heightens the effect; and when this mysterious harmony bursts forth into the magnificent peals of the grand chorus, it seems to electrify the hearers, and

the effect is both grand and beautiful. As you pass through the churchyard of St. Alexander Newsky, the eye is struck with the inconceivable number of splendid tombs which are crowded into this grand burial-place of the Russian nobility, whose pride and wealth are displayed in these records of the dead. Some are of marble finely sculptured, others of bronze curiously wrought, all richly ornamented with various devices, and without exception surmounted with the gilt cross as the emblem of their faith.

The vault of the Scherematoff family is an object of the greatest curiosity. It is as large as a ball-room, and warmed by stoves constantly heated; no damp can approach these mouldering remains, enshrined in tombs of *or molu*, beautifully chased; and though some are more than a hundred years old, though their tenants have already crumbled into dust, these costly monuments still remain fresh and unimpaired as they came from the hands of the workman. In the most conspicuous part of this church is the tomb of Alexander Newsky, the patron saint; it is composed entirely of massive silver, finely wrought, and of immense value: near it is a *prie-Dieu*, of the same metal, which was

presented some few years back by the Emperor Alexander, as a votive offering to this shrine. A new decoration has lately been affixed to this monument in the keys of Adrianople, which were sent to Petersburg this summer by General Diebitsh, in commemoration of his conquest, and are religiously preserved here. There are some fine pictures by Reubens and Raphael near the altar, given by the Empress Catherine, who has also enriched the communion-table with a covering worked in velvet and gold by her own hand. Innumerable portraits of saints adorn the aisles, before which various votaries of both sexes are seen constantly bowing and crossing themselves with great veneration. Every thing in this splendid sanctuary attests the former wealth and magnificence of the old Russian aristocracy. The quadrangle attached to this church, which was originally a convent, is of considerable extent, and called the Cloister.

Here resides the great Archimandrite of Russia, surrounded by an establishment of above three hundred priests, who attend to the religious wants of the capital; they are clothed in black velvet robes and caps, wear long beards, and have rather a magical ap-

pearance. Their influence is considerable in the country, as the Russians are generally prone to superstition.

I have also seen the palace of La Tauride, which almost realizes a description in the *Arabian Nights*. It was built by Prince Potemkin, in commemoration of the conquest of that province; and, as it is said, so privately, that the whole was completed without the knowledge of Catherine, to whom it was first announced by an invitation to a magnificent fête on the spot in her honour. There was she received by her princely subject amidst a burst of splendour and munificence, which was only to be eclipsed by the grandeur of the termination, when the whole possession was laid as a costly offering at the feet of his imperial mistress.

This extraordinary scene was acted in a ball-room of such colossal dimensions, and of such peculiar design, that I may attempt to give you a faint description; more especially as all the decorations have been carefully preserved, and remain still in the same state as when this event took place. In shape and height it may be likened to a vast cathedral, the body of which, appropriated to dancing, is separated from the two aisles or wings, on

each side, by a range of marble columns and statues so vast and gigantic, that the eye loses all idea of human proportions, and the chairs become so diminutive that they only seem fitted for a race of pigmies.

Here is no gilding or flimsy ornament, which would be lost in the grandeur of the design; all is pure white. One of the immense wings is fitted up as a museum; it contains an infinite collection of foreign marbles and busts, principally antiques, which were purchased by Potemkin at a high price, and must, in the present day, be still more valuable.

The other wing, though included under the same roof, surrounded with the same walls, and fitted up with windows corresponding to the rest, is a real perfect garden. Here are walks of gravel, and grass-plats in constant verdure, shrubberies of myrtle and evergreen, orange-trees in full bloom, and every produce of the hot-house; while rustic seats, marble statues, vases, and fountains, are scattered about in profusion, to carry on this magic deception.

The whole temperature is warmed by stoves and pipes of hot air, which produce an oriental climate amidst frost and snow,

where the rays of a cheering sun are seldom felt. The other suites of apartments are numerous and well proportioned, but plainly furnished. This palace was a favourite abode of the late Empress, and the gardens are still tended with much care; but, since the death of her Majesty, it has generally been appropriated to the reception of distinguished foreigners, for whom the court has thought fit to provide a residence during their stay in Petersburg.

The last occupier was the Prince of Persia, who came here in the spring on a *penitential* embassy at the conclusion of the war; and the apartments inhabited by his suite are now undergoing a process of painting and purification, which their Persian habits had rendered necessary.

The Russian page expressed much disgust and irritation at the disorders which they had occasioned; though it only reminded me of some of his own countrymen, who lodged in the same hotel with myself at Paris, in the year 1814.

Sufficient occupation for one morning, and really of a very agreeable nature, will be found in a visit to the Mining College and

the Academy of Arts, which are not far distant from each other.

When the extent of this empire is considered, and the vast tract of territory which is exposed to the action of various climates, it is natural to conclude that one great source of wealth may be derived from the mineral treasures which are concealed under its wide-spreading surface. To this point the Russian government has directed its most serious attention, and the mining department is conducted here on a scale of exertion and intelligence which reflects the highest credit on the wisdom and liberality of the Emperor.

The mountains within Russia, as well as those on the frontiers, abound with minerals of almost every description; in addition to the precious metals, which become daily more productive, amethysts, topazes, agates, lapis lazuli, and various stones used in jewellery are found in them: while the plains of Siberia furnish to the naturalist food for speculation in the bones of gigantic animals unknown in the present day, mammoths' teeth, and fossils innumerable.

The institution of this college comprises three hundred pupils, maintained within the

walls at the expense of the crown; their education is of course principally directed to the acquirement of knowledge in this department, and the most able professors are selected to superintend their progress in every branch of this interesting study.

The regulations of the establishment are enforced with military exactness; the young men are placed under the command of officers in the army; they are all clothed in uniform, subject to regular discipline; and the different dormitories, in which they sleep by companies, are remarkable for peculiar neatness and cleanliness. There are various galleries in successive order to be seen, which afford as much instruction as amusement to the visiter; that of the models, which are executed with great ingenuity, is by far the most interesting.

The whole process of mining is here represented in miniature: there are models of every machine which is used in excavating the earth, and bringing its treasures to light; models of the most productive mines in Siberia, delineating with great accuracy the different strata, lodes, and veins of chemical or metallic substances, by which they are peculiarly distinguished; and models of the

houses and working establishments on the surface, of men and horses at their daily labour, of engines in motion, &c.; forming altogether a panorama of scientific industry which no books could explain.

The other galleries contain innumerable samples of metallic produce, arranged with symmetry and classed under their proper heads; besides the gold, silver, and platina, there are the largest specimens of malachite, precious stones, and curious petrifications. The exhibition closes with a cabinet of medals, representing all the victories and memorable events which have occurred in the empire from its earliest foundation.

The Academy of Arts is a palace in point of structure, but contains very few objects of interest or importance: it is adorned with models in plaster of all the fine Italian statues, which have little intrinsic value, and there are a few good paintings; the most remarkable of which are a set of hunting pieces, the joint effort of Reubens and Snuyders, the figures being executed by the former, and the animals by the latter.

The encouragement of native talent in painting is the great object of this institution; the large apartments were filled with stu-

dents, occupied in this pursuit, at their different easels: report speaks favourably of their progress, and some had received the honorary prize of a medal from the directors. Those who give proofs of real genius and talent, when they have passed through the different classes, are sent to finish their studies in Italy, where a considerable colony is already formed for that purpose.

The Russian government, sensible of the disadvantages under which the country had laboured for so many years, from the widespreading ignorance which had pervaded all classes of its subjects, has turned its thoughts seriously of late to cultivate the arts of peace, and take in hand the task of general education. The two above institutions are only trifling proofs of that spirit, when compared with the other vast projects of civilization and improvement of the human mind founded by the beneficent Alexander, and continued by his enlightened brother; projects which at first met with great difficulties in the ungrateful soil, and were always accompanied with a secret dread that the introduction of luminous ideas might shake the foundations of the throne itself. This must always be the feeling of a despotic monarchy.

A Frenchman with more wit than truth remarked of this country, "*qu'elle étoit pourrie avant que d'être mûre*;" but he only looked at Petersburg, where the general corruption and dissolute morals of the court at that period, contrasted with the uncivilized character of the whole surrounding nation, gave some handle to the observation. Russia is neither *pourrie*, nor *mûre*; she is still in her cradle, and may grow up to be a giant if properly nursed.

Previous to the reign of Peter the Great, and, I may say, almost to that of Catherine II., the existence of this country was hardly known in Europe, except as a fabulous tale, or barbarous legend, which few took the trouble to investigate. Her superior mind, her ambition, and her grandeur soon attracted the general attention of the world; and it is interesting to observe how fitted her character was to suit the exigencies of her people at that particular crisis. They had great physical means, but few moral resources; they needed civilization and refinement.

Surrounded by the powerful Boyards who composed the court of her late husband, Catherine saw with regret that their uncouth manners and boorish habits were totally un-

fit to obtain respect among the polished nations of the South, with whom she anxiously desired to establish an influence. It thus became even a political object to form and polish the Russian aristocracy.

Her constant correspondence and connexion with French literati, the zeal with which Parisian manners and fashions were inculcated at St. Petersburg, the hospitality shown to strangers, and, above all, the example of the Empress herself, who in public affected the grandeur, and in private the ease and elegance, of the court of Versailles, soon effected a striking alteration in the Russian courtier. Wealthier even than his foreign rivals, and naturally extravagant, he indulged in scenes of prodigality and magnificence, which flattered the vanity of his mistress, and brought, as usual, in their train a general relaxation of morals: and, as the vices of that insinuating court which was held up as a model were much more easy to imitate than the high-bred air and elegance of their deportment, the court of Petersburg, towards the close of that reign, had arrived at a pitch of corruption and profligacy which gave rise to the cutting observation I have lately cited.

This degeneracy of morals, which after all

was only limited to a certain class, but the most influential in the state, gradually diminished that feeling of respect and fear for the royal authority which had hitherto characterized the Russian nobility: they became turbulent and self-willed; so much so, that when Paul I. came to the throne, however he may be justly accused of caprice and cruelty in many instances, yet some acts of severity were justified by necessity, and proved a wholesome exercise of authority, rather than the act of a despot.

Yours ever,

LETTER VII.

Emperor Paul. His character and death.—Review of his policy.

Accession of Alexander and of Nicholas.—Archduke Constantine.—Political and military power of Russia—Her civilization. Former despotism of her Nobles.

Petersburg, 12th December, 1829.

MY DEAR ———,

I STATED in my last that Paul had given some wholesome lessons of severity to his turbulent nobles, but I did not mean to offer an excuse for the numberless acts of extravagance and cruelty which marked his short and unfortunate reign. The gangrene was in his mind long before he came to the throne; a continued series of ill-treatment had exasperated his feelings, and perhaps alienated his reason.

Brought up with unnatural harshness by his mother Catherine, who from the proud height of her power never deigned to treat

him like a son, he was during thirty-five years of his life, the object of humiliation and contempt from all the court, which he endured in silence, while he trembled before the overwhelming genius of his repulsive parent. When at length by her death he was placed on the throne of his ancestors, he found it surrounded by men who, feeling themselves naturally the objects of his aversion, were jealous of their own pretensions, and ill-disposed towards his authority.

Paul was fully impressed with the danger of his position; and his conduct was governed by a firm resolution to mortify the pride, and check the insubordination, of these turbulent spirits. When one of the Narishkins, with a haughty air, claimed of him some privileges which he asserted were due to him as prerogatives of his noble rank, Paul replied, "Are you aware, sir, that there are no men of rank in Russia, except those whom I choose to notice; and, moreover, that they only continue to remain so as long as I am pleased to notice them?"

The recollection of past mortifications, acting on his galled nature, was immediately manifested in the most undisguised hatred of every favourite who had been fostered, and

every plan which had been projected, by the late Empress. Under the mask of reform he was guilty of various acts of oppression and cruelty, he committed even freaks of extravagance which bordered on folly; but in all these rash and incoherent proceedings, there still might be traced one paramount feeling uppermost in his mind,—a rooted dislike to the memory of his mother.

The extraordinary step which he took in ordering the disinterment of his father's body, Peter III., that it might be transferred to the imperial burial-place in the fortress, awakened a host of fears and recollections in those who had hoped that the circumstances of that tragical death, if not forgotten, would never again be exposed to public notoriety. The corpse was brought from the monastery of St. Alexander Newsky with great pomp to the palace, where it was destined to lie in state for three days previous to its final removal.

At this awful moment Paul conceived the wild idea of uniting in death those whom hatred, crime, and ambition had so widely separated in life. The bodies of the late Empress Catherine and her husband, the murdered Peter, were exposed together to

public view on a magnificent platform, erected on purpose, surrounded with all the melancholy pomp of an imperial funeral.

The spacious apartment was hung with black; silver sconces adorned the walls, from whence the lighted tapers threw a gloomy ray on the gorgeous catafalques, and groups of priests occupied in performing the last religious duties to the dead. The doors were thrown open for the admission of all the court. Here a scene ensued which is hardly credible; but it is so positively asserted by those who could have no intention to deceive, that I cannot disbelieve it.

The body of Catherine, which had been embalmed with a negligence which almost seemed premeditated, offered to those who advanced to make their obeisance, and kiss the hand of the deceased, an object of the most disgusting horror. Amidst the costly ornaments and jewels with which, as if in mock derision, the imperial remains were decorated, the worm of corruption was seen writhing through its prey, and the loathsome symptoms of decomposition had left in the hideous mass no trace of the features of the once haughty and puissant Catherine.

The surrounding crowd retired shudder-

ing, and in doubt whether this dreadful spectacle originated in a feeling of respect, on the part of Paul, to his father, or in his still unceasing hatred to his mother. The latter idea became most predominant when Alexis Orloff was seen, dragged from his retirement by order of Paul, to assist at this funeral procession, and hold a corner of the pall which concealed the corpse of his former victim. With trembling steps he followed in the melancholy train; while his body, bent with years, and his features convulsed with agony, testified how severely he expiated the past at this trying moment.

It was a refinement of vengeance, not only pardonable but justifiable, if it originated in filial affection; but it tended more and more to alienate the hearts of those who were already predisposed to murmur at every act of their ill-fated sovereign.

Few circumstances excited more discontent against Paul than the changes which he effected in the army, and particularly in the regiments of guards. He always had a certain dread of that corps; and, in order to neutralize their influence, he incorporated with them troops which he had raised himself, during his retirement at Gatshina, merely as

an object of amusement, but on whom he naturally felt that every dependence could be placed in case of danger. The result of this ill-judged measure was, that above three hundred officers of the first families in the empire, finding themselves obliged to associate with, and in some instances placed under the command of, men of low birth and inferior condition, threw up their commissions and quitted the service. These, and many other instances of tyranny, folly, and even barbarity, at last produced that fatal conspiracy which ended in his death. Count Palmerston seems to have been the leader of this decisive step, which was originally contemplated with no other view than to insist on his abdication of the throne; and, as such, was represented even to Alexander in a light so necessary to the welfare of the state, that he himself could not, however repulsive it might have been to his feelings, withhold his assent, coupled, however, always with the condition that in any case his father's life should be most religiously respected.

The conspirators, having first murdered the sentinel on duty at the door, broke into the room where Paul had retired to rest at night in the St. Michael's palace. Great

was their panic when, rushing to the bed, they found it empty, and their victim gone. Their first impression was that he must have escaped by a private staircase which communicated with the apartment of the Empress below; but the door on examination proved to be still locked on the inside, and a closer search discovered the unfortunate Emperor hidden in the recess behind his bed. Dragged forth from his retreat by his assassins, he began in despair to make a vigorous resistance; terms were proposed to which his bold spirit refused to listen when dictated by traitors: at length, disconcerted by the struggle, and seeing no chance of safety to themselves if their victim should escape, his enemies closed upon him, and brought him to the ground, when his own adjutant, Argamakoff, unloosing his military sash, passed it round the neck of his prostrate sovereign, and consummated the foul deed of regicide.

The grief of Alexander was rendered more bitter by the flagrant bad faith with which the conspirators fulfilled their promises; it is but justice to add, that all who were implicated in this black transaction incurred his most special displeasure, and were forced to live far away from Petersburg.

It is now too late to comment on an event which will soon come within the province of the historian; but, if the Russian nation is really intent on joining the ranks of modern civilization, she must seriously reflect on a long arrear of blood-stained annals, which can only be effaced by a new career of loyalty, moderation, and humanity.

The foreign policy of Paul, during his very short reign, was marked by the same rashness and inconsistency which distinguished his internal government at home. He declared war at once against revolutionary France, he made a new commercial treaty with England, he gave to Louis XVIII. an asylum at Mittau, he raised new levies, equipped new fleets, and, having signed a treaty offensive and defensive with Austria, he sent to her assistance a formidable army under Suwarrow, which successfully attacked the French, and nearly drove them out of Italy. This was only in 1799; and, in a few short months, we find the fickle monarch concluding an alliance with Bonaparte, laying an embargo on all English shipping in the Russian ports, and, in opposition to the interests of his own subjects, breaking off all intercourse with a country which not only of-

ferred the best market for all the raw productions of his empire, but by her maritime supremacy, her wealth, and intellectual advantages, was calculated to be the most formidable foe or the most powerful ally of a rising state. If ever a war should occur in Europe, the advantage for Russia will always be found in the scale of an alliance with England.

France has once made a gigantic effort to reach her frontiers, which only brought discomfiture on herself; and can never be repeated, because the resources which favoured that invasion will never again be placed at the disposal of that power. The two countries are separated by so many intervening states, that they can never again attack or assist each other with any great effect.

The first act of Alexander's reign acknowledged his wish for friendly and pacific relations with Great Britain; the embargo on her shipping was immediately taken off, and a treaty of navigation signed, which ratified the amicable feelings between the two countries. These feelings have now subsisted, with the exception of one short interval, 1808 to 1811, for eight-and-twenty years unshaken and unimpaired, notwithstanding the unceasing efforts of the bitterest enemy of our

commerce and prosperity to destroy them. They were even maintained by Alexander at a risk which seemed at one moment to threaten the very existence of his empire.

The inheritor of his throne, as well as of his excellent qualities, regulated by more prudence and greater steadiness of character, is the great security to Europe for the peace and tranquillity of this vast empire, both at home and abroad. Every thing that I can learn here proves that, during the short period of his reign hitherto, he has succeeded in obtaining, not only the respect, but the love of his subjects. His personal courage was as conspicuous at the trying epocha of his accession, as his affability and activity in business since he has been seated on the throne. How he arrived at that throne, in preference to his elder brother Constantine, was at first the subject of much mysterious speculation to the world; but the arrangement was made with the consent of all parties, during the lifetime of Alexander.

The marriage-law, and right of succession, particularly as regards the imperial family, are rigidly enforced in Russia. Constantine was firmly attached and had privately united himself to a lady of great worth, but of an

inferior rank, by whom his children could never aspire to the throne. Sensible of these disadvantages, but true to the object of his affections, he sacrificed ambition at the shrine of love, preferred a voluntary retirement to the splendour of a crown, and signed the transfer of his claims to a younger brother. At the death of Alexander, when the mutiny broke out among the troops in Petersburg, his name was unfairly made the watchword of revolt; the soldiers were instructed by their leaders to cry out "Constantine and the constitution." When asked the meaning of this cry, the ignorant and deluded men thought it was "Constantine and his wife." At that moment, it is said that he wished to avail himself of the impulse; but it was too late, the energy and bravery of Nicholas had decided the day.

The Emperors of Russia have entered into the path of civilization, retaining at the same time those advantages which result to a government from a state of barbarism. A part of the empire has imbibed the civilization of Europe, the rest still remains plunged in all the barbarism of Asia. If, then, the civilized portion were sufficiently enlightened, and sufficiently strong, to regulate the mere brute

force of barbarism, they would together form the most menacing and formidable union in the world,—that of the *force aveugle* directed by the *force raisonnée*. But, fortunately for Europe, this empire is become too extensive on the barbarous side to admit of such a concentration of its power against its neighbours. The care of her own destinies must form the principal occupation of Russia. Monarchies so vast as these have always an inevitable tendency to disunite and divide themselves; increase of territory is not always followed by increase of strength; and the capture of Constantinople, so invitingly situated as a great capital, if ever it should be achieved, might suggest again the formation of an eastern and western empire from the North, as it has already done from the South.

In a military point of view the importance of Russia is merely comparative: she is superior to Asia, but she is inferior to Europe generally. What she has gained of late years in modern improvements has been derived from her wars with European powers; it must be allowed that she has been an apt scholar: but, had she during that interval been limited to her usual warfare with Asia, she would at this moment be far less formi-

dable than she really is. Europe now has the double advantage of knowledge and power; but while the gates of Polangen are so strictly guarded against the introduction of the former, Russia will never be able to compete with those combined auxiliaries against her. There are, in fact, no apprehensions of danger to be entertained from this quarter, even if the pacific disposition of the present government did not tend to allay them. On the contrary, Europe has every reason to desire the diffusion of moral improvement over so large a tract of the habitable globe; and this empire, if properly governed, is capable of receiving a rapid development of its dormant energies. One possibility still may occur,—that its Emperors, startled at the liberal opinions which must follow in the train of European civilization, or overawed by the discontent and menaces of an aristocracy jealous of their privileges and obstinate in their pretensions, may rush headlong into the opposite system, and attempt to plunge the nation backwards into Asiatic despotism and degradation. It will require a strong mind and a clear head to resist this impression; such, if report speak true, is now on

the throne, and such a life is then the most valuable life in Europe.

The dawn of civilization is only just breaking on this country: it has tinged with its light a few privileged *castes*, who from their height were more exposed to the rays; but the rest still remain in utter darkness. While the march of intellect, and the progress of social improvement, have been making such rapid strides in Europe that the people have not only learnt their right to be governed with justice, but have dared to assert it; in this country, ignorance and slavery still predominate. A long succession of weak princes in Europe has taught their subjects the important secret, that royalty, and not wisdom, may be hereditary.

If then the time is past when instruction and example are to be derived from the higher classes, the time is gradually approaching when, from the general extension of knowledge, they will arise from the lower. If the light does not descend from above, it will ascend from below; there is no chance of the Vestal flame being extinguished. Under these novel circumstances, this exaltation of one class and depression of another, if kept

within proper bounds, effects not less a beneficial change in the social, than in the political system. In both it eradicates prejudice, it levels distinctions; it not only brings the people nearer to the throne, but it brings mankind nearer to each other. The man of science without rank feels his claim, the man of rank without information must perceive his nullity; and, in proportion as this moral level is established, how much must the general intercourse of society be softened and refined! I am no advocate, as you know, for what is generally called the levelling system,—that interested cry of the Radical party, which has no other object or real signification than “*Ote toi de là, pour que je m’y mette;*” but a due weight thrown into the scale of humble talent, and as much deducted from that of ignorant pretension, may be as salutary in the moral world, as a limited power to the monarch, and constitutional liberty to the subject, may be necessary in the political.

But here am I, in the capital of Russia, talking of limited monarchy and constitutional liberty; words as unintelligible to a Russian ear, as their difficult language is to mine.

Some idea may be formed of the extreme despotism which the nobles formerly exercised over their vassals, when, no farther back than during the reign of Alexander, a ukase was issued, mitigating their subjection to the following extent:

Every serf was allowed to enjoy the fruit of his own private labour. The nobles were forbidden to sell their serfs *separately*, and without the land on which they were settled: they were also forbidden to inflict corporal punishment without trial, or to force them into marriages without their consent.

Extraordinary as it may appear to us that such a law should have been requisite, still this memorable ukase, which was a great act of public beneficence at the time, has been followed up by others of the same tendency; and, if the liberal intentions of the donors are not frustrated by opposing interests, it is not too much to expect that the present debasing system may be gradually abolished.*

Ever yours.

* It is not necessary to observe that these remarks were written in the year 1829; since which, great ameliorations have taken place in the position of the serfs, all tending to the enfranchisement of the lower orders.

LETTER VIII.

Statue of Peter the Great.—Anecdote of Napoleon.—Inconvenient embarrassment.—Post-office.—Imperial Palace.—The Hermitage, and its splendid paintings.—The Weather.

— Petersburg, 17th December, 1829.

MY DEAR —,

IN the most conspicuous part of this city, near the Admiralty, has been erected the celebrated statue of Peter the Great on horseback, which was executed by a French sculptor, Falconet, according to the design of Catherine. The idea of placing that monarch on a rugged rock, instead of an ordinary pedestal, was novel and grand; but the execution has been a failure. The rock, which was brought with infinite labour and expense from the marshes of Finland to the banks of the Neva, was originally forty feet long and twenty feet high.—

Such a mass, in its natural state, would have been highly appropriate; but the artist had the vanity to think that he could improve it: he chipped it, he mauled it, he destroyed the free and rough character of the block, to give it a more polished appearance; and having, by his officious interference, reduced it to one-half of its original size, he finished by giving it the shape of a cap of liberty,—rather a farcical emblem in this despotic country. He thus destroyed the effect of the statue, which now represents a little rock groaning under the weight of an immense horse; and, by another inadvertence, Peter himself appears in the old Russian dress, which he had so arbitrarily compelled his subjects to abandon.

The horse is a fine composition, prancing on his hind-legs; which being insufficient to support the ponderous weight of the body, an emblematical serpent has been introduced, twining upwards to his tail, on which he is supposed to trample. This did not escape the quick eye of our facetious friend Y——, when he was here a little time ago; who, as he passed by this statue, remarked, with his usual humour, “It is a very fine horse, but what a pity that he should have worms!”

I dined yesterday in company with a person who has long been a resident here, and amused me with several anecdotes; he was well acquainted with Caulaincourt during his embassy to this court; and, being himself a Frenchman, was probably intimate with the secretaries and suite from whom he gained his information.

When Napoleon had accomplished his divorce from Josephine, and wished to ally himself with a legitimate power, it has always been asserted that he hesitated in his choice between a grand-duchess of Russia and an archduchess of Austria, both of whom were willing to accept his proposals. It appears that Caulaincourt did receive private instructions from his court to sound the feelings of this imperial family on the subject of a marriage between Napoleon and the Grand-duchess Catherine Paulowna, sister of the Emperor Alexander.

As one primary obstacle was suspected in the scruples of the Empress-mother, it was thought advisable to commence operations by some vague allusions to the connexion, so perceptible as to draw forth the expression of her sentiments, and yet so guarded as not to compromise the dignity or vanity of the

imperial suitor. This delicate mission was intrusted to the French ambassador, who, if the story is true, used the following ingenious device to fulfil the object of it.

On the next interview which he had with the Empress-mother, after the discussion of various topics which had no particular tendency, he gradually, and as if by chance, led the conversation to the subject of dreams; her majesty was rather superstitious, and swallowed the bait: Caulaincourt followed up his advantage; and, having engaged her attention, proposed to relate a singular dream which, no later than the preceding night, had happened to himself. The Empress expressed her willingness to hear it. Caulaincourt then detailed in that shape the object of his secret mission: he pretended that he had dreamed of an order, sent to him by Napoleon, to demand the hand of the Grand-duchess Catherine Paulowna; he took care, during the recital, to introduce certain flattering eulogiums on the princess herself, which he thought might tend to propitiate her in his favour, and then waited in silence for a comment. The Empress, who had listened with increasing gravity to every word, then calmly replied, in a tone which discon-

certed all his hopes at once, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous savez bien que tout songe est un mensonge."

The disappointed Caulaincourt returned to his hotel, and despatched a courier to Paris with the mortifying intelligence; Napoleon then transferred his proposals to the Archduchess Marie Louise, which met with a more favourable reception.

As if there was always a secret under-current in affairs, both public and private, which moved the destinies of mankind without their knowledge, my informer pretended that the fatal invasion of Russia by Napoleon might be traced to this refusal; nay, more, that the defection of Francis II., in 1813, was only occasioned by his private resentment, when he at last heard of the previous preference shown for an alliance with Russia. If such ridiculous suppositions could have any weight, the history of the world should be written afresh.

There is one extraordinary deficiency in a populous capital like this, which is also highly inconvenient; there is no little post. During my short stay at Berlin, I met at Sir Brook Taylor's a gentleman attached to the Russian embassy, who requested me to take charge of a letter for the Grand-duchess He-

len. The day after my arrival I sent my servant with this letter to the palace, directing him to give it into the hands of her imperial highness's chamberlain; but great was my surprise when he brought it back, saying that, on being introduced to that officer, he had recoiled from the packet as if it had been infected, and absolutely refused on any account to receive it. I was obliged to go the next day, declare my name, and exhibit my passport, before I could be relieved from my trust. If there had been a little post, I could have avoided this embarrassment: but I have since learnt that this feeling of suspicion is not confined to the palace; it is the general custom in the great houses to refuse admission to all letters, unless the quarter from whence they come is clearly ascertained. It is a relique of barbarous prejudices, from which the nation is slowly emerging: by some it is ascribed to the apprehension of receiving applications for money, by others to a dread of unpleasant intelligence; but it must often lead to inconvenient embarrassments among themselves, and always produce an offensive feeling in the mind of a foreigner. A little post, therefore, if once established by the government, would not

only be a general convenience, but might tend to remove this barbarous prejudice. As to the general post in Russia, it is a source of unceasing anxiety to those correspondents who may become objects of suspicion to the government. I do not mean to say that every letter is opened at the office, but the fact is notorious, that no seal is held sacred in that department; and foreigners in writing to this country should be extremely guarded in their allusions to political subjects, as an indiscreet expression may involve a friend in some very serious embarrassment.

After dwelling on a Russian *petitesse*, let me turn to an object of Russian grandeur. I have lately seen the imperial palace; but I really want words to describe its extent, its magnificence, and the splendour of its decorations. The eye is really dazzled with a succession of gorgeous apartments, furnished with great richness as well as taste. The most striking of these are the throne-room, the chapel, or hall of St. George, the great dining-hall, the immense ball-rooms, and the *salle blanche*. These, and other state apartments, occupying the surface of acres, are one continued mass of burnished gold, painting, and carving; while the private apart-

ments are fitted up with superior taste and elegance.

Many of the walls are covered with a mastic preparation, only used in Russia, which has all the brilliant effect of china; the compartments are painted by the first artists in figures or flowers, which would rival the manufactory of Sevres. Another peculiarity I observed in the apartment of the Empress, which is no where to be seen in Europe: corners of the room are formed into *bosquets*, with trellis-work, interwoven with shrubs and flowers, which present the deceitful appearance of spring, while the immense windows of plate-glass show, as it were, only the picture of a winter scene without. There are various species of woods, all of Russian growth, which are used in the cabinet-work for panels, doors, and wainscots; producing a novel effect, much more striking than our oak or mahogany. One room in particular was panelled with a gray wood, the ornaments on which were of chased silver, finely executed, combining an air of simplicity and of magnificence.

Here are seen, in a glass case, the imperial jewels, the crowns of both Emperor and Empress, and the sceptre, with the great Orloff

diamond at the top. There are but few pictures in this palace, except the portraits of the imperial family. One gallery is exclusively appropriated to those of the generals who have distinguished themselves in the last war; there may be two or three hundred half-lengths, and a whole length of the Duke of Wellington is placed in a very conspicuous situation.

There is an air of grandeur and colossal magnificence in this palace, which certainly may rival with Versailles, though I must still prefer the latter on account of its situation.

Adjoining to the winter palace is the hermitage, built by the Empress Catherine, for the purpose of retirement from the cares of state, and the reception of those friends whom she admitted to her particular intimacy. It is a spacious and magnificent building; contains a very splendid private theatre, only used on particular occasions; and, being situated so near to the other, appears to have been a very unnecessary piece of extravagance. These apartments seem now only destined to contain the vast collection of fine pictures which belong to the imperial house. I will only say, that a numberless succession of rooms are filled with the finest productions

of the old masters, which it would be endless to enumerate, and impossible to appreciate; they correspond with the boundless wealth of the proprietor.

For the last ten days the weather has been remarkably mild for this climate; but, while I was congratulating myself on a temperature from which I felt much less inconvenience than I expected, the very unseasonable change was productive of much anxiety here. A severe degree of frost is necessary at this season, not merely to the health, but to the very existence of the people. If the miasma from the marshy soil is not checked and kept down by the nipping frost, *malaria* will arise, producing various and contagious diseases: if there is not sufficient snow on the ground to form a *trainage* on the roads for sledges, all communication with the interior becomes difficult, or absolutely intercepted; and, lastly, the supplies of the capital, which depend almost entirely on the stocks of frozen provisions received from all parts of the country, if curtailed of these resources by the mildness of the season, may eventually become so scarce, that a famine would be the ultimate consequence: to this may be added the loss which must accrue to the farmer and pea-

sant from the corruption and destruction of their dead stock prepared for the winter's consumption. Thus, in the distribution of events, there seems an unerring system of compensation pursued by nature, which atones even for its own deficiencies; a course so regulated by wisdom, that even a momentary departure from it must produce confusion. To-day these apprehensions may subside; the snow falls, and a gloomy sky promises a change of weather. It is, moreover, the birthday of the Emperor Nicholas, who is still too unwell to appear in public.

The days pass here with most inconceivable rapidity. It is hardly light at nine in the morning, and it is dusk before three in the afternoon. The nights are long and tedious, as never was any capital so destitute of public amusements.

I have just received your letter, and will reply to it in a few days.

Yours ever.

LETTER IX.

Pouschkin, the Byron of Russia.—His writings, and death by duelling.—The Arsenal: Trophies of war.—Magnificent funeral car.—Pictures of the Imperial family.—Ice-hills.—The Theatres.—Etiquette.—Equipages.—Military colonization.—Magnificent dinner to the Emperor.—Taste for puns.

Petersburg, 24th December, 1829.

MY DEAR ———,

I MET last night at Baron Rehausen's, the Byron of Russia; his name is Pouschkin, the celebrated, and, at the same time, the *only* poet in this country. His fame is established and unrivalled; no competitor attempts to win the laurel from his brow. His poems are read with delight by his countrymen, who alone can appreciate their merit; and his labours are not without reward,—he can always command ten roubles for every line

from his publisher. In such a dearth of literature and literary taste, it will be no great injustice to suppose that his compositions may be overrated by his readers; and, as his genius is not likely to be excited by emulation, they will, probably, not be voluminous, particularly as, content with his present fame, he seldom has recourse to his muse except when his finances begin to fail. I could observe nothing remarkable in his person or manners; he was slovenly in his appearance, which is sometimes the failing of men of talent, and avowed openly his predilection for gambling: the only notable expression, indeed, which dropped from him during the evening was this, "*J'aimerois mieux mourir que ne pas jouer.*" Though a decided liberal, and *sourdement* implicated in the late conspiracy, he has always been treated with great attention and kindness by the Emperor; his muse, also, was enlisted in the revolutionary cause, and produced a poem which, under such circumstances, no other despotic sovereign could ever have forgotten or forgiven. It made a great sensation here: it bears the trait of genius; and, as it has never been printed, I have obtained a copy of the French translation.

“ Le Poignard.

“ Le Dieu de Lemnos t’a forgé pour les mains de l’immortelle Nemesis. Oh ! Poignard vengeur, mystérieux gardien de la liberté, dernier juge de la violence et de l’opprobre ! Lorsque la foudre divine est muette, lorsque le glaive des loix est rouillé, tu brilles, tu viens réaliser les espérances ou les malédictions !

“ L’ombre du trône, la pourpre des habits de fête dérobent en vain ton éclat aux regards du scélérat que tu menaces ! Son œil épouvanté te pressent, et te cherche au milieu des repas splendides. Tes coups inévitables le trouvent, et sur les routes, et sur les flots, près des autels, et sous la tente ; malgré le rempart des verroux, et sur un lit de repos, et dans les bras de sa famille. Le Rubicon sacré bouillonne, franchi par César ; Rome succombe ; la loi n’est plus qu’un vain fantôme ! Soudain Brutus se lève, et César meurt, abattu aux pieds de Pompée, que réjouit son dernier soupir.

“ De nos jours la Proscription ténébreuse, enfant de la Révolte, pousoit des cris sanguinaires. Un bourreau hideux veilloit auprès du cadavre mutilé de la Liberté nation-

ale: cet apôtre du carnage envoyoit les plus nobles victimes à l'Enfer insatiable, mais le tribunal des Cieux te remit à l'Eumenide vengeresse.

“ Oh Sand! martyr de l'indépendance, meurtrier libérateur! Que le billot soit le terme de ta vie, la Vertu ne consacre moins ta cendre proscrite: un souffle divin s'y conserve encore; ton ombre courageuse plane sur le pays si cher à ton cœur, elle menace toujours la force usurpatrice; et sur ton auguste mausolée, brille, au lieu d'épithaphe, un poignard sans inscription.”

Under so arbitrary a government I know not which is most extraordinary,—the audacity of the poet who composed, or the magnanimity of the sovereign who overlooked, such a violent and treasonable production.*

* At the time these letters were written, Pouschkin was still one of the disaffected at Petersburg; but the Emperor, wishing to encourage his talent, gradually drew him nearer to his person: he pardoned some other exceptionable productions; and at last bound him, by a promise, not to publish any verses without previously submitting them to his perusal. He then made him one of his chamberlains, and treated him with great favour. Pouschkin was now in the road to prosperity; he married a young lady of great beauty, but this marriage has lately produced the most fatal consequences. In February last the public papers announced the following catastrophe: “The celebrated Pouschkin the most distin-

At the extremity of the Faubourg Gargarin is the arsenal, bristling with cannon, as if to intimidate the multitude. This is a repository of arms of every description; and, notwithstanding the draughts that have been made from this dépôt to supply the troops in the late war with Turkey, there still remains sufficient to equip a very numerous army with all the matériel necessary for a campaign.

Great care has been taken to preserve every trophy of past victories; not a standard or a flag, however tattered, has been lost or mislaid: some decorate the churches, the fortress, or the palaces; but the largest collection is reserved for this arsenal, where they are classed under the heads of the va-

guished poet of Russia, has been killed in a duel at S. Petersburg, with his brother-in-law, Mr. d'Anthes, a French officer in the Russian service, and the adopted son of a foreign minister accredited to this court. The quarrel, which has terminated so fatally, originated in some family disputes. The deceased survived his wound only about two hours; his adversary has also been seriously wounded. The foreign minister to whom allusion was made, is Mr. Haekert, the representative of Holland at S. Petersburg. This event produced a great sensation in society: the Emperor was sorely afflicted, and Mr. d'Anthes was condemned by a Russian court-martial to the rank of a private; but, being a foreigner, was sent out of the country. He was a young man of distinguished manners; and, but for this melancholy circumstance, would have attained a high rank in the service.

rious nations from whom they were taken: in this wholesale display of national vanity, it was some satisfaction to me that not one British colour was to be seen.

There are some models in wood of different fortresses, both European and Asiatic; some curious ancient field-pieces, cuirasses, and uniforms; among others, the whole wardrobe of the late Emperor Alexander, and all the orders with which he had ever been invested. Here is also shown the magnificent funeral car which conveyed his body to the grave; it was driven by his own favourite coachman, to whom he had given the rank of colonel, according to the military rules of precedence in this country: the mourning standards, the armour, and other decorations used in the procession, are also carefully preserved for future service. In all the public institutions, in all the palaces, the pictures of the imperial family abound; there is an excellent painting of Alexander on a gray horse, by Dawe, an English artist, of which several copies have been taken: but I think I forgot to mention that of the Empress Catherine, which is seen at the Academy. She is there represented in male attire, riding on a spirited horse, like a man, in the full uniform

of the Preobayenskoi guard, leathern breeches and military boots, with a drawn sword in her hand; which may have given Voltaire the idea of naming her Catherine *le grand*.

To prove that our predictions of frost and snow have been amply verified, the ice-hills are established in all their glory, and are a constant morning's amusement to the amateurs: they produce frequent falls; but the frozen slope is bounded on each side by a barrier of snow, which receives the unskilful adventurer without any personal risk. The sledges on which they sit are like small iron trays with a cushion, so light, that each person can carry them up the steps to the starting-place under his arm. It is an amusing sight while the novelty lasts; but, as there is no variety, and the position of the performer is rather ungraceful, a mere spectator is soon satisfied.

We have here an Italian opera, a French, German, and Russian theatre; but the French is decidedly the favourite of the court, as the imperial family are very regular in attendance. Their box is on the *avant scene*, not distinguished from any other in the house: they come without any state or ceremony, seem to enjoy the representation like any *bourgeois*,

and are not remarked by the audience, as they sit rather retired from the front: sometimes you may catch a glimpse, from the stalls, of the Emperor's person in a common military gray cloak, when a stranger would suppose it was some officer of the guard enjoying the play with his family. The etiquette which is studiously avoided by the Emperor and Empress on these occasions, is still rigorously enforced by their subjects; no carriage with a pair of horses is allowed to draw up, when the piece is over, till those with four horses have driven away; which obliges a foreigner to submit to that additional expense; as the same ridiculous rule prevails at the door of private houses, if, as in some cases, the carriage and pair is not completely excluded.

It struck me at once that this exclusive law must weigh heavy on many young men in society who could ill afford the expense of keeping four horses; but I was informed that, though a carriage and pair was inadmissible, a sledge with one horse was considered an aristocratic conveyance, and might pass any where. The result of which is, that a man may arrive at a ball in an open sledge, covered with snow; but he is debarred

from the comfort of a close carriage, if he cannot pay for four horses to draw it.

The equipages in Petersburg are of a very inferior description, which could not well be otherwise in such a climate; even in the imperial stables there are few valuable horses, and no state carriages but of the most ordinary appearance. This European luxury has not yet been introduced.

I have been anxious to obtain some information on the plan of military colonization which has created so much alarm in Europe, and has been, though without foundation, considered as menacing the future repose of surrounding nations. The first idea is supposed to have originated with Count Aratchief; but the plan was embodied by Alexander, and its success only defeated by the ill will of those who were to become the instruments.

The following, as I hear, was the principle of their organization. By an imperial ukase, those villages which were inhabited by peasants, slaves of the crown, and consequently the property of the monarch, were marked out as military colonies; and a register kept of the name, the age, the property, and family of each householder. Those who

were above fifty years of age were selected as masters of the colonists; to each were allotted residences built on the same plan. Each master receives an allotment of forty acres of land to his own use, on the condition of supporting one soldier, his family, if he has one, and his horse, if he is attached to a regiment of cavalry. In return, the soldier is bound, when not engaged in military duty, to assist him in the culture of his farm, and time is allowed for this purpose during the harvest and sowing season; but at present, that the colonists have been called into actual duty, little dependence can be placed on their agricultural services.

When a new generation shall have arisen, equally accustomed from their youth to husbandry and arms, the plan may work better than it hitherto has done. The commanding officer of the district selects the soldier colonist, and places him with his family under the master, who is himself also obliged to wear a uniform and learn the exercise; selecting, at the same time, a near relation to be his own adjutant, and, in case of his death, to succeed him. The colonial soldier is doomed to this military life for twenty-five years, dated from

his register; at the expiration of which he is at liberty to quit the service, or be invalided.

In addition to this levy a second rank is raised, called the reserve, which is drilled in the same manner, subject to the same duty, but kept to replace the first, in case of death or accident. This reserve is likewise, in its turn, to be replaced by a list which is made out of resident peasants, who may also be followed by children marked out for the same destination. These residents, as well as the children, when they are above eight years old, are also drilled and used to the uniform. They are taught to read, write, and cast accounts, in a Lancastrian school; to which, also, the women are admitted. This is the gradation of substitutes to succeed each other; and, if the system should take root in the empire, three-fourths of this population belonging to the crown will become soldiers.

The peasants have hitherto made considerable opposition, which has been put down by force: but, as this military slavery has not the same attractions for them as the agricultural, it may be hoped that it will ultimately not succeed. It must be remem-

bered that these colonies are quite independent of the general levies; the one are serfs of the crown, the other those of the nobles. Every recruit so levied becomes free, and is lost for ever to his master: the road even to nobility may be opened to him by very distinguished military services; but the cases are rare, and attended with little advantage, as he never himself could be possessor of an estate with slaves. This law attaches to all freed men: the richest merchant in Russia, though completely emancipated, may buy estates without, but never with slaves; and he may cultivate them with free labour, if he is able to find hands, but this is attended with much difficulty. Deprived, therefore, of this mode of investment, their chief object is to purchase houses in town, which produce them a high rate of interest for their capitals, and very much enhance the price of house-rent in Petersburg. The government, it is said, would wish, if possible, to abrogate this law, which operates as a check on commercial transactions, to the detriment of the public revenue; but other considerations are opposed to the alteration. Those very peasants who bear the idea of slavery to the nobles, not only without a murmur

but in many instances with a decided preference, looking at this state of things as the natural arrangement of Providence; but they would instantly rebel at the idea of having one of their former equals for a master, and would rush into any excesses sooner than submit to such a degradation.

I have thus tried briefly to detail the outlines of this unnatural attempt to combine two occupations so widely opposed to each other. In the first place, so great an innovation, effected by military coercion, must be the source of many abuses, and of much violence to individuals; in the next place, an experiment of this contradictory nature, which transplants a peasant from his home, in order to place a sickle in one hand and a musket in the other, seems little likely to answer in either shape. The rural and military pursuits seem to me quite incompatible together. To pass the morning at the plough and the evening at the drill, to hurry daily at stated hours from the farm to the barrack, to be occupied alternately in raising food for the support of life, and in preparing means for the destruction of it, is, to say the least, an incongruity repulsive to common feeling and common sense.

A magnificent dinner was given yesterday to the Emperor by the Count Potoski, to celebrate the following event. In times gone by, this family, one of the richest in Poland, had made a present to their government of ten pieces of cannon, of very curious workmanship, with their arms embossed upon them. The little train of artillery was afterwards in the wars of that period taken by the Turks, and highly valued by them: the fate of war has just placed them at the disposal of the Emperor; they were taken by the Russians in the last campaign, and one of them has been presented by his order to the representative of the Potoski family here. The cannon has been placed as an historical ornament in his largest drawing-room; to commemorate which this sumptuous dinner has been given. The wags of Petersburg say that a *ball* would have been more appropriate. Puns, indeed, are rather in favour here: at a grand ball when the crowd was, as usual, very intent to force a way into the supper-room, the Grand-duke Michael exclaimed, "Maintenant on sait ce que c'est que la liberté de la presse!"

Yours ever.

LETTER X.

Academy of Sciences.—Burial-place of the Sovereigns.—Peter the Great, the Nobility, and Priesthood.—The City exposed to sudden inundation.—The Marble Palace.—Population.—The Russian Navy.—Military power.—Policy of England during the war between Russia and Turkey.—Italian Theatre.

Petersburg, 1st January, 1830.

My DEAR —,

I MAY begin this letter by wishing you a happy new year, a compliment which would be premature in this country,—as the Russians, who are a century behind us in moral improvements, are only twelve days behind us in the calendar; that is, they still preserve the old style, which has a singular effect when I read, in the Petersburg Gazette of the 19th December, extract of a letter from Berlin, dated the 21st of the same month.

Every foreigner who comes to this place should visit the Academy of Sciences, which is the most extensive and curious in Europe. I am not going to give you a detail of its contents; but here, I believe, are to be seen the forms or skeletons of every animal, fish, or bird, from the mammoth to the smallest insect which ever burst into life since the creation. In this temple of natural history there is a vast collection of minerals, which Siberia alone was rich enough to supply: near them is a petrified tree, three feet in diameter; and an enormous tortoise, which has been conveyed hither on a fragment of the rock with which time had identified it. One room contains the anatomical collection of the celebrated Dutch naturalist, Ruysch, purchased by Peter the Great; it was, at that period, the most considerable in Europe, but is here only the *nucleus* of the present enormous mass. Peter, during his reign, gave orders to all, even the most distant points of his empire, that every caprice of nature in the human formation should be preserved, and transmitted to this academy; rewards also were offered, to ensure compliance; and as the system has been continued by his suc-

cessors, whose dominions have since been so widely extended, some idea may be formed of the endless variety of the subjects.

Another compartment, destined to the reception of legitimate monsters, is filled with crocodiles, dolphins, whales, sword-fishes, &c. Near the door of this room is the stuffed figure of a giant, seven feet and a half high, well proportioned; he was the Heyduc of Peter the Great, and came from little Russia: a dwarf has been placed by his side, to render the contrast more striking. As all rights are comparative, it would seem that the rights of a despotic sovereign supersede all funeral *rites*. This dwarf and giant have, by an imperial mandate, been deprived of Christian burial, that their bodies may furnish a lesson of anatomy to the Russian professors. There is also an elephant of vast dimensions, mounted by his Indian conductor; but the most curious and novel object in the whole collection of fossils is the skeleton of the mammoth, sole remaining victim of the deluge. This gigantic animal was discovered on the ice of the White Sea by a traveller; its head is nearly perfect, and armed with two rows of teeth which appeared to be near six feet in length: the mammoth is taller than the ele-

phant; and, if we may judge by the frame, exceeds him in bulk.

The academy, grateful to its founder, preserves his effigy in wax, as large as life; it is clothed in his usual dress, and seated in a chair: his favourite English horse, and the two dogs which always followed his steps, whether at home or in the field, are stuffed with straw, and shown under a glass case. The country still seems to feel a great debt of gratitude to his memory; and the battle of Pultawa, in which this English horse is always introduced, forms the subject of many pictures in the imperial palaces.

The fortress, which is situated on the right bank of the Neva, nearly opposite to the Hermitage, contains a church, which is the burial-place of the sovereigns; the other branches of the imperial family are laid in the monastery of St. Alexander Newsky. When you are introduced into the vault, you see the tombs ranged in a line, at some distance from the wall; each covered with a mantle of gold brocade, to which is attached a medal, with the resemblance of the individual deceased. Here was the corpse of Catherine placed, next to that of Peter, as directed by their ill-fated son: that of Alexander reposes

between his mother, the Empress Maria Fedorovna, and his consort Elizabeth; all three died within the space of a twelvemonth. The vault is spacious and lofty, but plain and simple, without any pompous inscriptions or escutcheons, and the air is warmed by stoves to prevent the damp. Comprised in the fortress is the imperial mint, and the state prison, in which some of the mutinous spirits who headed the rebellious troops at the accession of Nicholas still expiate their crimes; others were banished to Siberia, and five were hanged on the glacis according to their sentence. Hard by this spot is shown a wooden building, which Peter the Great erected for his own accommodation on the banks of the river, before this great city was built: it may be about twenty feet square, and consists of three small rooms fitted up like a labourer's cabin: in one is a small oratory, which he used for his private devotions; and a lamp is now kept burning day and night before it, in commemoration of the owner. A boat is also shown which was the sole work of his hands, and does credit to his education at Saardam. In this humble cottage he projected all his plans for the elevation of this vast empire out of the crude ma-

terials which then composed the mass of the Russian people. From its latticed windows he contemplated the site which he had selected for this noble city, then a dreary marsh, garnished with the scanty huts of a few fishermen. The very nature of the soil seemed to defy the art of man to build a great capital on such an unstable marshy foundation, but his genius and energy surmounted every obstacle. His was, indeed, a genius which could embrace every object, from the lowest to the highest, within its grasp; which could descend to the manufacture of a pin and rise to the elevation of a capital, the wonder of the world. He foresaw the advantage to be derived from its maritime position, which must afford a ready communication with the heart of Europe; while the old capital of Moscow could only tend to keep up Asiatic recollections, which he wished to counteract. His persevering spirit, intent on opening the door of civilization to his subjects, proved triumphant, and Petersburg was built. Could he have dived into futurity before his death, and witnessed the fruits of his own genius, nurtured and improved by his successors with so much care and wisdom, he might have seen the grandeur of Ver-

sailles, which struck him with so much admiration during his visit to France, realized, if not surpassed, on the banks of the Neva. When Peter the Great came to the throne, he found two powerful orders in the state, whose turbulent spirit and arrogant pretensions, inconsistent with all his views of improvement, it became essentially necessary to combat and repress. I allude to the nobility and the priesthood. With this view he enacted that extraordinary code of military precedence which exists at the present day.

Establishing a new rank, which emanated solely from the throne, and superseded all claims of title and descent, Peter at once reduced the nobles to a state of abject dependence upon himself. A scale of military grades became the only road to honours, and even the civil offices in the state were only attainable by a distinction which set at nought all previous feudal rank and pretensions.

The reduction of the hierarchy was achieved by a much more summary blow. It was the custom in Russia on all great public occasions, that the Czar should proclaim his submission to the Head of the Church before his assembled subjects, by holding the stirrup of

the great Archimandrite when he mounted his horse to lead the procession. Peter shook off this degrading subjection by a practical allegory, which had nearly proved as fatal to the life, as it did to the rights, of the haughty prelate. He one day gave secret instructions that the quiet palfrey of the priest should be replaced by the most vicious horse in his own stables. Taking, then, his own usual submissive position, when the Archimandrite was in the act of mounting, he privately applied the rowel of a spur to the animal's flank, who instantly reared and threw the affrighted prelate to the ground. At this moment Peter vaulted into the vacant saddle, and, marching on in triumph, proclaimed himself the head of the church; a title which has never since been disputed.

Wonderful as the construction of this city has been,—in defiance even of the laws of Nature,—its foundation, established upon massive piles, and by artificial drainage, may still be considered as precarious. Placed in a marshy bottom, surrounded and intersected by a great river and its branches, which form the canals of Fontanka, Moika, and St. Catherine, this vast city may always be exposed to inundation, on any sudden

thaw, or rush of waters from the Baltic. That which took place a few years ago, created a dreadful scene of havoc and desolation both here and at Cronstadt; many buildings were destroyed, many lives lost, and ships of heavy burden in the harbour were torn from their moorings and thrown upon the land.

It is every where asserted, that, if the wind had remained only six hours longer in the same quarter, and with the same violence, the artificial foundations of the city must have given way, and all these splendid structures would have been overwhelmed in one general wreck and destruction. There have been several instances of this nature before, but none so alarming as the last. That which occurred in September, 1777, was fearful to behold, but of short duration; it was thus described in the Petersburg Journal of that date;—"In the evening of the 9th, a violent storm of wind, blowing at first south-west, and afterwards west, raised the Neva and its branches to so great a height, that at five in the morning the waters poured over their banks, and suddenly overflowed the town. The torrent rose in several streets to the depth of four feet and a-half, and overturned by its rapidity various buildings and

bridges. About seven, the wind shifting to north-west, the flood fell as suddenly; and at mid-day most of the streets, which in the morning could only be passed in boats, became dry. For a short time the river rose ten feet seven inches above its ordinary level."

The highest floods have generally happened in one of the last four months of the year: the most serious effects are not produced by rain or snow; a swell is sometimes occasioned by the accumulation of masses of ice at the mouth of the Neva; but the principal causes of the overflowing of that river are derived from violent storms and winds blowing south-west or north-west, which usually prevail at the autumnal equinox, and the height of the waters is always in proportion to the violence and duration of those winds. In short, the circumstances most liable to promote the overflowings of the Neva, are, when at the autumnal equinox, three or four days after the full or new moon, a violent north-west wind drives the waters of the Northern Ocean during the influx of the tide into the Baltic, and is accompanied or instantly succeeded by a

south-west wind in that sea and the Gulf of Finland.

You may thus see that Petersburg, with all its grandeur, is not the most solid city in Europe. On walking back over the Neva, which is now frozen as firm as a rock, the marble palace is a striking object, from its *sombre* appearance, amidst the bright stuccoed mansions which surround it: the solid value of this structure is overlooked, when eclipsed by its more gaudy neighbours. It was built by Catherine, is now the property of Constantine, and is consequently unoccupied. Near it is the hotel of the Prince Gargarin, (not the director of the theatres,) on the quay which bears his name. He lives retired from the world, but surrounded by those, whose fidelity is, at least, more proverbial than that of man; his apartments are filled with a great variety of favourite dogs.* On this quay are also the hotels of the French embassy,

* Porson, at least, was of this opinion, as may be proved by his celebrated Charade on the word "*curfew*."

"My first, tho' the best and most faithful of friends,
You ungratefully name as the wretch you despise;
My second (I speak it with grief) comprehends
All the good and the great, and the learn'd, and the wise.
Of my whole I have little or nothing to say,
Except that it marks the departure of day."

the Litta, Gurieff, Woronzow, Zuvadoffsky, and Wolkonsky families. The streets in general are broad and spacious; but, with the exception of two or three great thoroughfares, an air of solitude prevails throughout: the outline of this town has been traced on such a gigantic design, that the population is insufficient to fill it up. The number of inhabitants may be reckoned at between four and five hundred thousand, including the troops which form the garrison; but the locality is so extensive, that double that number might circulate through the streets with the greatest ease and facility; the consequence of which is, that many quarters of the town look as if they were quite uninhabited.

I met the other day with an officer of the Guards, whose language seemed to breathe defiance to all the world, and particularly to English maritime power, which was the object of his peculiar hatred, notwithstanding our combined fleets have been so lately engaged in the same cause at Navarin. He took infinite pains to prove that Admiral Heydon was foremost in the action, and showed as much skill as the French and English commanders; which, though not quite corroborated by the public accounts, as

I did not feel a spark of national jealousy on the subject, I had no wish to dispute. Their late successes in the East have not tended to diminish this feeling on their side, and the opening of the Black Sea gives fresh scope to their hopes of a naval predominance in that quarter. They are building ships, for which their country produces every requisite material; and, if the language of individuals may be any clew to the intentions of their government, (though less here than in any other country,) it would seem that they are preparing to take a high hand in the affairs of Turkey.

The truth is, that their navy cannot be an object of jealousy to us in its present state: no complaint is to be made of their ships, which are undeniably good, if they were well manned; but how can they pretend to have good sailors? The Russian fleet is laid up in winter quarters during eight months of the year, under the forts of Cronstadt; and having no other field for nautical manoeuvres than two confined seas, which are mere lakes when compared with the great ocean,—I mean, the Baltic and the Black Sea,—how slow must be their progress in forming experienced seamen!

The present generation of the Russian crews must become superannuated and worn-out before they can acquire half the experience of a common English sailor who is still in the prime of life. Many English officers have, from time to time, entered the Russian service, and it is not too much to suppose that their assistance may have contributed to its present improved state; but when I hear the Russians boast of their naval preponderance, I rather look upon it as an assertion of what they wish to be, than what they are, or are likely to be, when opposed to us.*

* Seven years have passed since these remarks were written, and Russia has not been idle in the interval. Among other improvements, her navy has made considerable progress both in tactics and in force. Her fleet now, without counting that in the Black Sea, amounts, according to a late report made by an English officer, to twenty-six sail of the line, besides frigates, &c., victualled, and manned with thirty thousand seamen. On the other hand, what has England done to maintain her wonted superiority on the seas? Ruled by a party which can only remain in power by truckling to popular clamour, whether it be for theoretical rights or a pitiful economy, she has, under the latter plea, allowed this great bulwark of the nation to dwindle into a state of reduction which no circumstances can justify; then, with an inconsistency worthy of its system, this same government, which culpably neglects our means of repelling aggression, studiously alarms and excites the public apprehension with fears of Russian ambition and Russian aggrandizement, while it tamely submits to the Treaty of Unskiarskeleski in neglect of our maritime rights, and, in the case

With regard to the military power of Russia, her armies have been seriously exhausted by the late campaigns. Their ranks were thinned by the plague in Wallachia to such an extent, that an officer told me he could have fancied himself in the fields of Elysium, or rather, he might have said, of Tartarus, from the spectres and shadows by which he was surrounded.

It would seem as if the Turks had really adopted the means of defence pointed out by General Sebastiani to the Sultan in 1804,—“*de mettre les pestiferés en avant*,”—and had declined every other mode of resistance, as their apathy and inactivity were unaccountable. While the Russians were dying daily by this fatal disease, the Turks were in perfect health; and, while the army was besieging Shumla, its progress was arrested more by the sickness in its own ranks, than by the resistance of the garrison. Under such circumstances the campaign might have been interminable. At length the mortality

of the Vixen, compromises our national dignity in a much more serious manner. If in 1830, our maritime superiority over Russia was undeniable, we have both laboured since; she by increasing her force, and we by decreasing ours, to bring them much nearer to an equality.

arrived at such a pitch, that it threatened the entire annihilation of the invading army; and General Diebitsch received orders from Petersburg to push forward, *coute qui coute*, with his advanced guard, force the Balkan, and march direct on Constantinople, leaving in his rear the hospitals filled with the sick and the dying.

Out of the wreck of this once numerous and powerful expedition, the general was unable, in the first instance, to collect more than sixteen thousand men for this purpose; and had the Turks made any opposition to their march,—had they even dried up the fountains on the Balkan, of which there are only ten during the whole route,—they might have defeated this last adventurous object of the campaign.

There are now not more than twelve thousand men at Adrianople, halted there with the prize in view, and unable to obtain it. The Pacha of Scutari with his troops, had he continued the war, might have changed the face of affairs, and kept the Russians at bay; then, if a second campaign had become inevitable, fresh re-enforcements would have been required, and Russia would now have

no resource but the Polish army, which for obvious reasons she dare not move.

The policy of the Duke of Wellington's government on this occasion has been, and unjustly, accused of too much forbearance in permitting silently this aggression on Turkey; but his eagle eye probably foresaw how little this nation would gain by the conflict, when compared with the expensive cost, both in men and money, which it would entail upon her. As Dr. Franklin would have said, she has paid dear for her whistle; and, as vanity has been the principal gainer, we may allow a reasonable share of vapouring to balance the loss on the transaction. Of this the Russians certainly do avail themselves at present to a great extent; but common justice must allow that their noble resistance to the designs of Napoleon, and their conduct during the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, give them every claim to military glory: but it remains to be proved whether dreams of farther conquest can be realized. If they would seriously set about the task of moral improvement, and cultivate the arts of peace, they would find it a surer means of impressing their neighbours in Europe with

a respect for their power, than can ever be effected by their swords and bayonets.*

I went to see *Otello* at the Italian theatre: the prima donna, Madame Schoberlechner, who acted the part of Desdemona, is a Russian; she has a good voice, and sings with taste, far better than the Italian *Otello*, Nicolini, who is a very poor performer both as singer and actor. In the next box was Madame Zavadoffska, who is reckoned the handsomest woman in Petersburg; which is no compliment to her, as she might claim the same distinction in any other country. I concluded my last letter with a Russian pun, and am now tempted to send you another.

M. de Narischkin (Demitri) was one day at court, when the conversation turned upon the war which Russia had then just declared against Turkey. The Empress-mother was very animated on the subject, but frequently interrupted by the noise of a door, which creaked upon its hinges, she inquired of Mr. de N—— what it could be? He immediately replied, “*C’est la Porte, qui demande des secours à la Grèce.*”

Adieu!

* Much has since been accomplished by Russia in the cultivation of these arts of peace. A farther note will touch more at large on this subject.

LETTER XI.

Comparison between the Labouring Classes of England and Russia.—Parochial division of Russia.—Aristocratic Associations.—Rights of Citizenship.—Internal organization of the country.—Policy of the Emperor Nicholas.—Causes of the impoverishment of the Nobility, and the recent change for the better in their condition.

Petersburg, 9th January, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

THE few English papers which the Censure here permits us to receive, teem with accounts of increasing privation and distress among the lower orders with you. If a comparison were drawn between the respective situation of these classes in the two countries, I mean as to physical wants and gratifications, how much would the scale lean towards this population of illiterate slaves! The Englishman may boast his liberty, but will it procure him a dinner?—will it clothe his

family?—will it give him employment when in health?—or, when sick, will it keep him from the poor-house or the parish?

The Russian hugs his slavery; he rejects the airy boon of liberty, and clings to more substantial blessings. He lives indeed without care for the present, or anxiety for the future. The whole responsibility of his existence rests with his lord; if he owes not this to a sentiment of humanity, he claims it by the stronger tie of interest, which identifies him with his *seigneur* as part and parcel of his property and wealth. If the seasons are unfavourable, if the harvests fail, they entail no scarcity on him, no dread of meeting the tax-gatherer or still harsher landlord; his *seigneur* bears the loss, and will even incur debts to maintain his population for *his own* interest. Should even that motive not be sufficiently cogent, a ukase of the Empress Catherine, dated 4th August in 1782, strictly enforces it. If he is sick, medicines are provided from the same source; but the general cure for all their ailments is the vapour bath, which operates its effect in twenty-four hours, and for which there is an establishment in every village. The labour of cultivation is light, and the soil broken with little exertion; in great part of the empire manure

is not required, as the snow, which covers the earth during six months of the year, is of itself a source of fertility. That Providence, which dispenses order and regularity in all its works, which adapts every situation to existing circumstances, has arranged the vegetation in this unfavourable climate with its usual beneficence. No sooner have the icy bonds, by which the soil has been bound for so many months, begun to dissolve; no sooner have the cheering rays of the sun made their appearance, than the process of vegetation takes a magic start. The whole system of agriculture for the year is completed in four months; as October generally brings the return of winter; when labour must cease. Many alleviations have taken place of late years in the state of these peasants, which did not exist formerly. The sale of slaves without the land is forbidden to the master under pain of confiscation; they are protected from the imposition of extra labour for his benefit; those who are once free can never return to a state of slavery under another master, and have the right of redeeming their wives from servitude on payment of a sum of ten silver roubles; they may engage in commercial enterprises, even in the most distant parts of the empire, if furnished

with a passport from their lord; and many of them become possessed of large property; but they are not the less mougiks, or slaves, and pay a large retribution yearly to their lord in the shape of an *obrok*.

The same is the case with those who enter into handicraft trades: they pay an annual rent according to their gains; in some instances a moderate sum, which enables them to economize, and eventually procure for themselves not only independence, but liberty; in others, if their masters are rapacious, a more exorbitant demand is made: then, if they conceive it to be unjust or intolerable, they have been known to give up all their prospects of future advantage, and return to the glebe as common labourers on the estate. All here are divided into the two classes of noble and slave, except those who have ransomed themselves, or been enfranchised by the Emperor. The slaves are attached to the soil, and therefore the property of those who own it. One of the favourite projects of Alexander was to do away gradually with this debasing system, and, by enfranchising the Russian peasant, to civilize and improve his moral position. It is hardly credible, but not the less true, that one of the

chief difficulties which the Emperor encountered was from the peasants themselves; the next was, naturally enough, from the lords. Alexander wished to establish the liberty of the serf by continuing him on the land as a tenant, subject to the payment of an annual tribute to the owner. This he thought would be equally satisfactory to both parties, whereas it only produced equal discontent on both sides. The peasant, who knew little of the value of liberty, but was fully impressed with the value of the land, at once declined the boon of the one, unless the other were added to it; while the landlord, on his side, was decidedly opposed to any infringement on his rights, much less on his property.

The proposal was combated with much virulence, and engendered a feeling of hostility against the author which he little deserved: it still remains in abeyance; but both classes must come to a sounder and more enlightened view of the subject before it can be practicable in this country.* In the mean

* The greater part of these serfs refuse their liberty on a calculation, which shows their natural bias to slavery. They contend that by their enfranchisement they would lose a patron and protector, whose weight and influence might still be very necessary to them in the present state of the country.

time, the monarchy, placed between an aristocracy jealous of its rights even to insubordination, and a commonalty averse to liberty, except coupled with spoliation, is seated on a mine of revolutions, which at any time may explode and produce incalculable mischief.*

It was the conviction of this awful situation, made but too apparent by the mutiny on the accession of Nicholas, which decided the war with Turkey last year,—it was the

* These remarks are still applicable to the present moment. Count Gurieff was anxious to try the new system of letting his lands to free men, in hopes of improving his revenues. He offered first to his serfs to sell them their liberty; then to give it them gratis: in both instances he met with a decided refusal. The peasants demanded that with their liberty he should also give the land, which they had cultivated from father to son, and had been accustomed to regard as their own property: it is needless to say that the negotiation fell to the ground. But here seems to be one of the great obstacles to the project of enfranchising the Russian peasantry; and yet it would appear necessary that this operation should take place, before ideas of natural independence are implanted in their minds, and they themselves feel their right to be free. In such a case, it is but too apparent that the freedom which they would extort from their masters might be coupled with the spoliation of their property. The advance of liberal ideas in Russia must always be attended with fear and apprehension. Where a constitution is so vicious in its origin, great caution must be used in amending the defects; but, on the other hand, as education is making rapid strides in the country, there is an equal risk that the spread of knowledge may open the eyes of the people prematurely, and excite them to anticipate the tardy reform projected by their rulers.

hope that by uniting under one common standard of the Cross both the rebellious boyard and the enslaved serf, against the enemies and oppressors of the Greek church, a new and religious impulse might be given to their excited feelings, and the seeds of civil discord be, at least for the present, repressed. The war is terminated; the army has been severely chastened, but put in good humour by the laurels it has won; the Emperor is popular, but feared and respected; the surface every where appears to be tranquil; and it may therefore be hoped that, under the present energetic ruler, the late restless spirit of insurrection may be tamed and allayed. To return to the slaves. As compared with our English peasantry, the great mass of them may be said to enjoy a greater share of physical comforts than with us; they are, perhaps, treated like valuable animals; and, I believe, many an English pauper in his time has envied the fate of a pampered horse or a favourite lap-dog. The result is, that, while beggars abound in other countries, none are seen here; each mougik has a master, consequently a home.

The soldiers (except those from the military colonies, who belong to the sovereign,)

are levied generally from all estates by a ukase from the Emperor; and every conscription of this nature is so much taken from the pockets of the nobles: this of itself would form some obstacle to a war of aggression, if not undertaken for a popular object, and, in proportion as civilization advances, may prove a check to the ambition of future princes.

The peasants of the crown* have superior advantages to the rest; they are equally mougiiks, but they really possess and enjoy all the advantages of the land on which they live,—with this reserve, of course, that they cannot sell it, or use any overt act of ownership. They are subject to the inspection of overseers, as in England, belonging to the commune or parish; and pay an *obrok*, or tribute in money, which differs according to the nature of the soil: in some governments it is three paper roubles per head, in others only two and a-half.

In every parish the priests are enjoined to maintain schools for the children from six to ten years old: the father of a child who dis-

* The peasants of the Crown amount in number, according to the last statement of the Minister of Finance, to 21,463,933 individual of both sexes.

tinguishes himself by application and intelligence, has a claim for certain diminutions in his tribute, or in his manual labour.

A Russian parish is a little community, governed by its own members chosen for the purpose. They keep an exact account of all the serfs on the estate of the lord; they portion out the land for a term of three years; they settle with his steward the amount of tribute to be paid to him per head, and superintend the collection; they advance the payment of the *obrok* in a gross sum, and are answerable for the defaulters; they have a reserve fund for these purposes, and enjoy a sort of local influence and independence be-fitted to their situation. On observing the union and order of these little associations, it may give rise to some serious reflections for the future; more particularly when it is considered that the number of these serfs comprises six-sevenths of the whole common population.

In opposition to these diminutive republics, which exist all over Russia, may be placed the aristocratic associations, which, though less numerous, are also governed by an elective power. Every three years the nobility of each district or government assembles by

right in order to elect the functionaries, whom they are privileged to appoint, and to listen to the remonstrances or demands made upon them by the governor, who is nominated by the crown. This governor can only make known his intentions in writing; he has no right to intrude into the assembly of the nobles, or disturb their deliberations; while they, on the other hand, are empowered to express their objections to him in person, to make representations direct to the minister of the interior, or even to send deputies to the senate and the Emperor. These assemblies are held in a building specially destined for that purpose in the chief town of each government. They are presided by a marshal of their own order, selected every three years by the governor of the province out of two candidates chosen among themselves. In order to possess a vote in this assembly, it is necessary to have an estate in that government, or to be an officer of superior rank in the army, which is a general qualification for all preferment. The other functions of these assemblies consist in preserving the rights and immunities of their order from any infringement.

A noble cannot lose his caste unless he be

found guilty of high treason, murder, robbery, or forgery; and this by a sentence of his peers, from which an appeal is open to the senate, and from the senate to the Emperor. A noble may enter into the service of a foreign power; but, on the first intimation from his government that his services are required at home, he must obey the injunction. Every man of property absent abroad must appear every five years in Russia under pain of confiscation of his goods.

A noble may quit the service, both civil and military, when it pleases him so to do. The nobility of each government has the right to present candidates for all the civil employments. In this view, the nobles capable of service, and who are qualified by rank, are invited every three years by the higher functionaries to make known their pretensions. A meeting of the assembly then takes place to decide by ballot the selection, and the names of those who obtain the majority of voices are forwarded by the civil authorities to the central government at Petersburg. This list of candidates is presented to the Emperor and to the senate, with a detailed account of the nature of their demands, their age in the service, and the

number of votes they had obtained in the assembly. No one can be placed in a situation beneath his rank; and the nobles who have no rank in the classes, are placed as simple clerks in the different offices.

The inhabitants of the towns, who have the rights of citizenship, assemble also every three years, by order of the governor-general, for the purpose of electing a burgomaster and the elders, and of presenting petitions to the government. No one can be an elector, or himself eligible for these situations, unless he is twenty-five years old, and pays taxes to the amount of fifty roubles. The other citizens may be present at the assembly, but have not the right of vote. A citizen can only be judged by the civil tribunals; nor be deprived of his liberty or his property, except by a sentence inflicted for crimes, within the letter of the law. In the chief towns of each government, the judges of the civil tribunals are elected every three years, under the sanction of the governor; the magistrates and justices of the peace are elected yearly. Each of these municipal bodies has the right to make remonstrances to the governor of the district; it has its own seal of office, its archives, and its assembly-house. In Livonia, in Fin-

land, and in the provinces of the Baltic, these privileges and immunities are still more extensive.

This internal organization of Russia is little known in Europe, but not the less important; it explains perhaps better than all political considerations, the unanimity shown by this people in their resistance to the enemy in 1812, and serves as a clew to other events which have since followed in its train. One natural effect of this organization is, that every effort made by the Russian government to check and reduce the great aristocracy must have the effect of increasing the weight and influence of the middling classes, or perhaps, to express myself more appropriately, to create a middling class out of this innumerable mass of serfs and slaves, who are not less formidable than their superiors.

The policy of the Emperor Nicholas, which in this respect corresponds with that of his predecessors since the time of Peter I., has had uniformly for its object to draw the great and powerful nobles into the service of the crown; to detain them at a distance from their estates; and, in conjunction with the empty honours lavished upon them, to invest them with public employments, which en-

tailed great cost and expense, in order to diminish their wealth and accelerate their ruin.

It was the principle which guided the views of Cardinal Richelieu when he crushed the feudal aristocracy in France, and laid the foundation of that system which afterwards filled the *Œil de boeuf* at Versailles with a host of needy and prostrate nobles, and rendered Louis XIV., the most despotic monarch in all Europe. The people then had not begun to speak out.* For this very same purpose the Lombard bank was established; a refinement in accommodation which offered an immediate relief to the necessitous spendthrift, founded upon the knowledge of his character, and the hope of ultimately obtaining his whole property. This bank advances money on mortgage of estates at an interest of six or eight per cent. which if regularly paid during a given number of years, the original debt is cancelled: so far the proposal is alluring, but, should those payments remain in arrear, the estate, at the termination of that period, falls to the crown.

* Victor Hugo, speaking of the present era, says, "Les idées sont devenues hommes;" which means, that the people have not only spoken out, but have *imbodied* their ideas.

The object of this measure has been amply answered. Under the reign of the Empress Catherine, that of the Emperor Paul, and of his successor the Emperor Alexander, the princes and satraps of Russia, eager to enjoy the pleasures and honours of the capital, readily abandoned the solitary residence on their estates, and gave themselves up to every species of prodigality at Petersburg. That taste for expense and dissipation, which is a leading feature in the Russian character, most admirably served the objects of the government in this instance.

In those days a sumptuous palace was built for the purpose of giving one splendid fête to an Empress; the income of ten years was squandered in uniforms and charges to please the Emperor Paul; whole estates were mortgaged to found a school for cadets, or a philanthropic institution, to curry favour with the Emperor Alexander; and, in the commencement of this reign, no sacrifices have been spared, no expense withheld, to flatter the wishes and taste of the present Emperor. The current, however, has at last expended itself: some few courtiers may still subsist by the favours and emoluments from the throne; but by far the greater number,

I may almost say the totality of the nobles, are nearly ruined.* There are not at the

* This was really the fact when I was at Petersburg; but circumstances have since taken a sudden change, and the last eight or nine years have effected an improvement in the position of the nobles, and in the industry of the country, which no one could then have anticipated. Some few of these ruined noblemen quitted the service in which they could no longer live with their former splendour, and retired to their own domains, with the view of saving money by strict economy, and thus redeeming their estates from the hands of government. This took place in the commencement of the financial administration of Count Canerin, who has always been anxious to encourage a spirit of enterprise and industry throughout the Russian empire. Up to that period the nobles had been contented to derive their income solely from the produce and labour of their serfs; a few, however, of the more intelligent and well-advised availed themselves of the extreme low price of wheat at the time to establish manufactories in their own neighbourhood, which soon produced very advantageous results. They, in a few years, repaired by these unexpected profits the damage which their fortunes had sustained by past extravagance, and extricated their lands from the imperial mortgages. Few examples are so contagious as those which hold out the prospect of wealth and affluence; from that hour it became a fashion or a rage in Russia to be possessed of some fabric or mechanical establishment. Those who still remained in the service were equally anxious to enter into the same speculations as their neighbours; they empowered their stewards and intendants to direct the operation in their stead, but the eye of the master was wanting; and the losses which they incurred by the mismanagement of their agents, when contrasted with the profits made by the other nobles, who lived on their properties, and overlooked themselves their own establishments, soon determined the former to follow their example. They also then quitted the service to preserve their fortunes from the casualties of trade, as the others had previously quitted it to improve and restore theirs by the profits. At present, Moscow, and all the governments in that direction, are overspread

present moment above three or four families who are able to open their houses with any

with machinery and manufactories, which employ an innumerable quantity of workmen. Cloths, cotton, silk and woollen stuffs, china, glass, and other objects of common consumption, are now manufactured at Moscow, and in the surrounding governments, at prices so low, that the prohibitory regulations, so rigidly enforced by Count Cancrin hitherto against English goods, have been lately taken off as no longer necessary. We are now informed that Russian industry has made of late such rapid strides in improvement as not to fear the concurrence of foreigners, and that English manufactures may be admitted at a wholesome but not prohibitory duty. I have not seen the new tariff.

One very curious fact, arising from this new order of things, is worthy of remark. The project of advancing money from the crown on mortgage of private estates, subject to redemption, which had been adopted since the time of Catherine, for the purpose of ruining and subjecting the nobles to the throne, has now latterly served to restore their fortunes, and render them as independent as the nature of their position will admit. The new commercial establishments have, during the last ten years, proved so profitable to the owners, that those even who wanted capital to commence operations, and set a manufactory on foot, have found their advantage in borrowing those funds from the Lombard bank, and mortgaging their estates at an interest of six per cent. while they could make the capital available in commercial enterprise to produce them sixteen or eighteen per cent. in the shape of profit. The advantage arising from these investments will, of course, gradually diminish when they become more numerous, and strive to undersell each other; but the road is made clear, and the progress is sure: the serfs are now familiarized with mechanical labour; the nobles are habituated to a residence on their estates, and to commercial ideas, which bring in their train ideas of independence. Another singular consequence has also arisen from the above circumstances, which was little to have been expected in such a country as Russia. The necessity of superintending the sale of their produce has forced the nobles, particularly at Moscow, into

vestige of their former magnificence: we have read of the luxury and splendour which

direct collision with the merchants, obliging them to meet at all hours for the purposes of business, and to live with them on a sort of footing of equality. On the other hand, the serfs, whether peasants or mechanics, have betaken themselves with redoubled ardour to trade. The members of the company of merchants are doubled in number within the last ten years, thus each advancing half-way towards the other; nobles and serfs have met together on the great arena of commerce; and such an amalgamation of classes, which have hitherto been separated by an impassable barrier, may, in a few years, produce a great change in the state of Russia itself.

Amongst the nobles who have become merchants and manufacturers at Moscow, and who give themselves up entirely to the prosecution of trade, may be reckoned some of the most distinguished names in the empire. The Prince Nicholas Trubetskoi, and the Prince Nicholas Soltikoff, have established manufactories of broad-cloth; the Prince Basil Metchorsky, a sugar-refinery; the General Orloff, a fabric of glass and crystal. These noblemen have all quitted the service, and have only retained the honorary titles of chamberlain, or gentlemen of the bed-chamber, which require no attendance or personal duty.

Moscow that ancient seat of the old Muscovite aristocracy, is now become a busy, stirring community; but the spirit of opposition to the court and the government has sustained no diminution by this metamorphosis. It still retains its old prejudices; but they do not in the present day affect its loyalty to the Emperor personally, because his character chimes in with them: his decided national spirit, and the ardour with which he encourages the progress of internal industry, ensure its affection. It is needless to say, that an opposite conduct would produce an opposite result.

Affection for the sovereign, and a general approbation of his measures for the public good, may prompt the offer of a voluntary donation, as was the case lately at Nijni Novogorod, when the

reigned among this wealthy class in the time of Catherine; we may see the spacious hotels which they once inhabited; but the windows are shut, the doors are closed, and the owners are either absent, or living in economical retirement. The dearth of hospitality arising naturally from these circumstances, and the want of all public amusements, render this capital a scene of dulness and ennui beyond all description: there are no foreigners except those attached to the different embassies and missions; and not more than two or three visitors like myself, who have no other occupation than seeing the *lions*. One consolation indeed may be derived from seeing

merchants came forward with a vote of a million and a half of roubles for the construction of quays on the Volga, according to a plan conceived by the Emperor on his journey. But the Emperor, who might obtain millions in this manner, was unable to raise a loan in his own dominions. With an immense revenue, and finances in the most prosperous state, his government is without credit; as the mercantile spirit of the Russians is too clear-sighted not to be convinced that arbitrary power and public credit must always be incompatible.

If then it became an object of the present government to throw down the gauntlet in Europe, and commence a war of aggression, funds would be required for the purpose; and those funds could only be raised by a previous consent to abrogate and limit that arbitrary power which now evidently exists, and which there is no disposition on the part of the ruler to curtail. The best security for peace is the want of means to make war.

that the natives themselves are overpowered with the same gloom, and appear to have no wish to dispel it; amusement indeed must become a secondary object to all, when a smile or a frown from the throne is watched with unceasing anxiety, and decides the fate of every individual. As to social intercourse or literary information, they are placed under shackles very grating to an Englishman: conversation on all political subjects is generally avoided; and a man must be very guarded in what he says at a public table, as spies are busy to collect information, and General B—, the minister of the police, is daily well-informed of every thing that passes. Books and newspapers are scrutinized with as much rigour as prohibited manufactures.

I have sent you a long and dry letter; but, as Cowper says, I had not time to send you a shorter.

Yours truly.

LETTER XII.

Celebration of New Year's Day.—Number and variety of the Guests.—Causes of the issue of the late Campaign against the Turks.—Generous conduct of Count W——.—Incongruities in the domestic policy of Russia.

Petersburg, 14th January, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

YESTERDAY was the Russian New Year's Day: it was celebrated by a fête which can be seen in no other country; it is a fête original, extraordinary, and characteristic of the nation. The sovereign and his family commence the new year by an assembly given to the people; not less than twenty-five thousand invitations are issued to this gigantic rout. At seven o'clock in the evening the doors of the Winter palace and of the Hermitage are thrown open to the multitude: the innumerable rooms are lighted up with

myriads of wax candles; at convenient distances are placed sideboards with refreshments, adorned with pyramids of gold and silver plate; bands of military music resound in every corner to amuse the ear; picked men, of the highest stature, from the Guards, are stationed in the ante-rooms, to give effect to the scene; and liveried servants swarm in every direction more numerous than the troops. And for whom was this colossal entertainment prepared? For every rank and degree; from the highest noble to the lowest peasant, all were equally welcome, without distinction, to pay their respects at the foot of the throne: there are no exclusions; rich and poor, the field-marshal and the invalid, the princess and the washerwoman, the master of the horse and the dancing-master, the maid of honour and the maid of all-work, the prince and the mougik, the Queen of Georgia and the French milliner, may all hope for a smile or a courteous word from the fountain of honour.

In this immense crowd, slowly moving through the apartments, no instance of disorder or incivility ever occurs; not even an attempt to steal the most trifling ornament, which to some must be a great temptation:

the Emperor is in the midst of his family, and the children are on their good behaviour. The wives of the rich Russian merchants press through the dense multitude, decorated with necklaces and ear-rings of pearls and diamonds, without any apprehension.

It would be no great injustice to suppose that, out of these twenty-five thousand guests, some of them might have been light-fingered yesterday, and will be equally adroit on the morrow: but on this evening a feeling of respect, of curiosity, and of pleasure, seem to engross every other sentiment; and these dubious characters leave their dexterity with their pelisses at the door of the palace.

The varied costumes of the Russian women (some of high rank attached to the court,) who were dressed in the richest habits of the distant provinces, added to the brilliant uniforms of the military, gave such a lustre to the whole scene, that the dingy caftans and bearded chins of the lower orders, far from impairing the effect, seemed only introduced as a dark shade to relieve the higher colouring of the picture.

At seven o'clock the different members of the diplomatic corps are introduced into the great hall of St. George, where they are re-

ceived by the Emperor, the Empress, the Grand-dukes, and Grand-duchesses, attended by their numerous court. This interview lasts but a few minutes, during which the crowd flows in like an inundation of the sea. The Emperor then gives the signal to move, by offering his hand to one of the ambassadors present; the whole court follows his example; and a grave *polonaise* is begun, which passes through all the different apartments to the sound of the military orchestras, stationed in every direction. This procession advances, without interruption, through the surrounding masses of all ranks, headed by the tall, commanding figure of the Emperor; at every instant he salutes his subjects, by raising the two forefingers to his hat: and though the anxiety to catch even a glimpse of his person is so great that the eager crowd seems to present an impenetrable barrier, it opens before him as if by magic; the waves of human bodies recede, and leave always a space of at least six feet in front to facilitate his progress. The men are all expected to appear in domino, which is only a short black mantle on the shoulder, without a mask; but the tradespeople and mougiks are exempted from this rule. Here was a collec-

tion of all those nations who are only known in Europe by their name,—Armenians, Greeks, Tartars, Persians, Georgians, Imeretians, inhabitants of Caucasus and of the Don, wearing their appropriate dresses, and gazing with astonishment at a scene which must have appeared to them the work of a magician. In those rooms where the Emperor was expected, the throng was at times so excessive, that parties were separated, shoes were lost, gowns torn, and respiration impeded; but no sooner had he passed than ease and tranquillity were restored. At last the polonaise is finished; and at eleven o'clock the Emperor, with his party, retired to the private theatre at the Hermitage, where supper was prepared. It is illuminated in the most splendid manner with crystal ornaments and silver fringe, representing cascades and fountains of water, which have a dazzling effect to the eye; twelve negroes in the Turkish dress keep guard at the entrance of this fairy palace. This curious assembly was conducted with the greatest regularity, and without any interference of police, military, or dictation of any sort; it is highly creditable to the mildness and civility of the national character, as the same exhibition on the

same scale in Paris or in London would have produced scenes of endless confusion. The heat only was oppressive beyond endurance; fortunately, on that night, the atmosphere without was not more than six degrees of frost, which did not expose the numerous guests to much danger in their retreat. Last year there were thirty-five degrees of heat in the apartments, and above twenty degrees of frost in the open air: the contrast was fatal; many deaths were occasioned by the sudden transition from heat to cold in the mere operation of getting to the carriage. Notwithstanding the inconvenience and fatigue which the Emperor must have felt during so long an exertion to please his numerous visitors, no feeling of *ennui* seemed to interrupt the constant cheerfulness and good-humour of his manner to all. The little hereditary Grand-duke was in the train, dressed as the Hetman of Cossacks; and several of the ladies wore the old Russian costume, sparkling with jewels and precious stones. The Emperor may be justly styled the father of his subjects, but few would wish to pass the evening with twenty-five thousand children.

Every thing I hear tends to prove that the issue of the late campaign is more to be at-

tributed to the weakness of the Turkish empire, the contemptible state of their army, and the unpopularity of the Sultan, than to any very brilliant achievements of their invaders. An officer, who is lately returned with the troops from Wallachia, sat next to me at dinner the other day, and mentioned several instances of the phlegmatic apathy of the Turks, proving perhaps more than he intended,—how few obstacles they had opposed to the boasted victories of his countrymen. At the siege of Sillistria, which was at last taken, the Turkish ordnance was very ill-served,—worse, perhaps, than usual,—as the contracts for stores in that department had been fulfilled in a most slovenly and disgraceful manner. At one particular battery, commanded by a young officer of engineers, the failure in the howitzers was so constant, that they were quite useless: he made repeated complaints to the inspectors, and to the commandant, without obtaining any redress; they heard him with gravity, smoked their pipes, and took no steps even to ascertain how far they were well founded.

At length, indignant at the position in which he was placed by the negligence or treachery of others, he rushed to the glacis,

where the Pacha was exercising some troops belonging to the garrison; and, in the presence of all, holding out one of these howitzers in his hand, he set fire to the match, which whizzed for a few seconds, and then expired. The Pacha, without changing a muscle of his countenance, calmly remarked: "Young man, you have risked your life with great indiscretion; however defective these howitzers may be, one out of ten on a moderate calculation might have exploded, and in that case you would have been blown to atoms."

At the close of this campaign, an officer in the Russian artillery, who had been an eyewitness of all that had passed, wrote and published at Odessa, but without prefixing his name to the book, a very correct and clever survey of the passage of the Balkan, taken by himself during the march; in which, without any sinister intention, he exposed the weakness of the position, and rather enlarged on the overrated difficulties which public rumour had hitherto assigned to this military exploit. General D——, proud of his success, took fire at what he conceived to be an attempt to depreciate the value of his late achievement, and wrote a letter of complaint to the Empe-

ror, demanding at his hands satisfaction for this anonymous attack on his laurels. The Emperor hastily, and from obvious reasons, entering into all the feelings of the general, gave directions to Count W——, as military governor in the provinces, to trace out the author of this plain-spoken publication, and visit him with punishment.

Count W—— convinced himself that the survey was correct, and that the author was actuated by no improper motive; he was determined not to become the minister of injustice, and, seeing no other chance of saving an innocent man, he at once gave himself up to the Emperor as the real author of the obnoxious document. The proceedings, of course, were dropped; but the generous and noble-minded interference of the governor is only one among many other proofs of his amiable character.

In proportion as their success in this last campaign was unexpected, are the Russians jealous of every attempt to lessen its importance in the eyes of Europe; and they wish now to impute to military skill and power that which, in fact, resulted from a combination of favourable chances. It is well known here, that, early in the war, fabricated ac-

counts of engagements were drawn up on the spot, for dissemination in the German papers, when not a bayonet had been crossed. The whole of this nation is an immense barrack, and they take no pains to conceal it. They have titles as elsewhere: they have princes and counts, but they are only noble by birth, which here gives no distinctions; they have no rank in the state till it is acquired by military service or grade, and that is open to all. A nobleman must obtain the rank of a major in the army, to have the right of ordering four post-horses to his carriage when he travels through the provinces. A prince even, if only a lieutenant, may see the son of a peasant, or a soldier, if they have obtained a majority, enjoy this right, while he is deprived of it. It is the most extraordinary instance of the levelling and the despotic principle combined in the same system.

The civil department is likewise subordinate to the military: no man can be appointed grand chamberlain, or a minister of state, without previously attaining the rank of general; and this graduated scale is carried down through all the degrees of civil employment to the lowest secretary or clerk, who ranks as an ensign. These distinctions

were originally intended as the reward of military services; but the Emperor has the power of conferring the requisite rank without the service; as no one will suppose that Count Nesselrode has fought his way with his sword up to his present high situation. The senate, which is the supreme court of judicature, as well as the court of appeals, the tribunals of first and second instance, the magistracy, and other civil employments, are composed of generals and officers, who receive these appointments as a provision for themselves, or in lieu of pensions on their retirement. What should we say in England, if Captain Firebrand, who had lost a leg at Waterloo, or a general on half-pay, had been made a judge on the western circuit by way of indemnification. These incongruities, to call them by the mildest name, produce here their natural consequences; law and justice never meet together. You will, perhaps, ask first, what is the law in Russia? The law is a record of innumerable ukases, made by successive sovereigns according to the impression of the moment, and without any reference to those which preceded. The ukase of to-day may be counteracted by that of to-morrow; but all remain in force, and furnish

a list of the most contradictory regulations. Thus, I might go to law with you, founding my claim on a royal ukase which makes my right undoubted; you might take up your defence under the protection of another ukase, which puts me quite in the wrong: how then is our case to be decided? By the will of these military judges. There are no lawyers, which in some cases might be considered a benefit; but here it is a real misfortune, as there are no means of unravelling the dark code of Tartar statutes, which still remain as a species of authority in what are termed the courts of equity.* A foreigner has less chance of success than a native; and, rather than have a lawsuit with a Russian, he generally submits to abandon a claim for which he has no hope of obtaining redress.

The administration of justice has not advanced a single step within the last fifty years:

* A laborious task has since been accomplished under the superintendence of M. Speranski. The laws of Russia have been compiled into two collections; the one under separate heads, the other in their chronological order. This immense work is comprised in forty-five volumes, closely printed, in the national language; it may facilitate the reference, but must expose the contradictions. The series of ukases issued by the Emperor Nicholas during the last ten years most clearly prove the tendency of his government.

the pleadings are all secret, with closed doors ; there is no check from public opinion, and suits linger on from generation to generation. The judges are as ill paid as they are little respected, and are driven by necessity to make the most of their situation ; bribery is openly practised, and the longest purse will have the best chance. I have, unfortunately, had occasion myself to visit the courts of law, and the tribunal which answers to our Chancery : great was my astonishment to see the public functionaries, from the judge down to the clerk, arrayed in military uniforms.

Prince K——, a Polish nobleman who has large estates in Livonia, where, as well as in Courland and Esthonia, the emancipation of the slaves has been effected, came here the other day to attend to a lawsuit going on between him and his peasants, which appeared very likely to be given against him. He told a friend of mine that he had been round to all the judges privately to *explain the case* ; and, as it is well understood what the meaning of this visit intimates, the peasants will probably go to the wall.

A merchant here, in the English factory, Mr. ——, who has occasionally had large contracts with the government, went lately

to make a tender of a cargo of red lead to the glass-blowing manufactory. He was received by the chairman of the board, who was in full uniform, with stars and decorations; his secretary was an aide-de-camp; and the young men employed in writing at a table were also in regimentals. Mr. — was not very well pleased with the result of his negotiation; but he told me that he should send a hogs-head of wine, merely with his compliments, to the chairman, and his business would be arranged. Some time ago this same gentleman had a large contract for lead with the Board of Ordnance, when douceurs to every individual in the office, from the general to the door-keeper, amounting in all to six thousand roubles, were absolutely detailed on paper, and of course included by him in his calculation of the price which he charged to the government. This system of peculation is not mentioned as being illegal, or derogatory to the individuals: it is publicly practised; and was not only encouraged, but exacted, by Catherine during her reign; and is one of the many evils which the present Emperor would wish, but is unable, to abolish.

It exists in every department; but, when it shows itself in the courts of justice, it then

becomes a hideous evil. I can speak from experience, that, in suits of all descriptions, your solicitor is intrusted with this distribution of bribes ; without which, success, even on the most just grounds, is unattainable.

Having thus alluded to the magistrates and higher functionaries of the state, let us now look at the general process of education for these aspirants to all the honours of the empire. From the cradle, all who are not slaves, are doomed to the military profession ; if you were to ask a lady here, with what views in life she intended to bring up her children, she would laugh in your face. The question, indeed, would be ridiculous in the extreme.

The rudiments of this art are taught in various public establishments: the first and second corps of Cadets, the schools of the Mines, the Artillery, the Engineers, the Lyceum of Zarschozcloe, and the Hôtel des Pages, receive in their bosom all the rising population which is destined hereafter to figure in the most conspicuous ranks of the state and of society. These establishments are kept in admirable order ; the dormitories are clean, the regulations are rigidly enforced, the discipline is military *à la lettre*, and the evolutions so frequent and so long that time

is only allowed for common physical recreation. When can the tired student find an opportunity to relax his mind with agreeable literature, or the intercourse of pleasing society? Never! His leisure must *par force* be occupied in repairing the waste of his constitution by sleep and proper nourishment.

In the next place, how are these classes governed, and who are the professors? Men who have in their turn previously received a similar education; men, generally speaking, of a certain mediocrity, of a limited share of intellect or accomplishment, who may perhaps succeed in making their pupils good officers, but have neither the time, the talent, nor, perhaps, the inclination, to make them any thing else. This system of drilling (for I can give it no other name) finished, without any fixed idea of the duties, either moral or religious, of a good citizen, these young martinets are sent forth into the imperial ranks, to vegetate in a garrison and command automaton, or *ply the bravo's trade* at the beck of a superior. In later life, when laurels have been won, when the constitution has been worn by fatigue, and the body perhaps crippled by wounds, with a mind still uninformed, and prejudices more strongly

confirmed, these very men are perhaps destined to assist in the councils of the senate, or to dispense justice to their fellow-citizens from a code of laws which is acknowledged to be unintelligible. This is only a general view; there are certainly many exceptions of well-informed men in the Russian service, who, by their own perseverance and talents, have rendered themselves superior to the shackles which awaited them from their infancy; and the rest cannot be blamed—they are only victims of a horrid, unavoidable system.

Yours ever,

LETTER XIII.

The blessing of the Waters.—Power of the Emperor.—His firmness in repressing Abuses.—Peculation at the Military Hospital.—German Alliances.—Paper Money.—Foreign Tradesmen in Petersburg.

Petersburg, 20th January, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

I HAVE received yours of the 6th, and also one from my old friend, who excuses himself from sending me letters of introduction to his friends at this place, on the plea that they are all military men, and could be of no use to a stranger; he might as well have said, that they all wear a head, as one is nearly as general as the other: *ma così va il mondo*, when you want a service.

On the 18th instant, which is the Russian

Twelfth-day, a religious ceremony takes place on the Neva, which I believe has no parallel in any other country, unless we adduce the now obsolete custom at Venice of the Doge espousing the sea. This ceremony is called the *Blessing of the waters*; and the object is, that the river Neva may, by the prayers of the nation, be rendered propitious to the navigation, and all other *purposes* to which rivers may be applicable in the neighbourhood of a great and dirty capital. The whole population of St. Petersburg and the environs is collected on the quays to witness this solemn invocation. An octagon temple formed of wooden trellis-work, adorned with pictures, gilded cherubs, and other religious emblems, is erected on the ice opposite to the Winter Palace. There are four entrances to this pavilion, which is approached from the shore by a wooden communication built on massive piles; that which faces the palace is decorated with a picture representing the baptism of our Saviour in the river Jordan. In the centre of this building is dug a large hole in the ice, which, at this season of the year, is generally four or five feet in depth; as, with some appearance of inconsistency, the nation has singled out this period for

blessing the waters, when the climate has rendered them completely invisible. Over this aperture is suspended, from the dome above, the figure of a dove.

In the morning, the Emperor, Empress, and imperial family, with the court, assist at divine service in the chapel, at which the Metropolitan Archbishop with the principal clergy preside: this service lasts from eleven till twelve o'clock. At that hour the procession issues from the palace: in front appears a priest bearing a lantern; then others with a cross, banners, and holy images; the court choristers precede the Archbishop and clergy, who are arrayed in gorgeous vestments, with flowing beards; then come the pages, and subalterns bearing the colours of the different regiments of guards; last of all the Emperor, followed by the Grand-dukes, and escorted by the great officers of state, his military staff, generals and courtiers, all bare-headed, and apparently impressed with the solemnity of the scene.

As soon as the Emperor has taken his position at one of the doors of the pavilion, the Archimandrite recites the prayers, and the choristers sing the responses; the blessing is

performed by plunging a silver cross in the waters, of which a vase is presented to his Majesty. A signal rocket announces the conclusion of the ceremony, and the cannon from the fortress again announce to the *cives* the beatification of proverbially the most unwholesome waters in all Christendom. The Empress and her court are seated at the windows of the palace; the foreign ministers, &c., view the procession from those of the Hermitage, which command the quays; but, as the ceremony itself lasts for nearly twenty-five minutes, it must be a severe trial for the Emperor and his suite to remain so long uncovered in this piercing climate.

As soon as the actors in this curious scene have retired, there is a general rush of the common people towards the temple: mothers are seen plunging their infants into the sacred opening which has been made in the river; while various individuals fill their pitchers with the holy water, and carry it home to their families, undaunted by the severe cold which freezes it during their walk.

On the same day, at Constantinople, the Greek Patriarch performs a like ceremony. He throws the cross into the sea; and it is

asserted that skilful divers eagerly await the operation, and generally succeed in seizing it before it reaches the bottom.

If Napoleon chose to say in France, "*Le trone, c'est moi!*" with as much propriety may the Emperor Nicholas say, "*La Russie, c'est moi!*" He stands alone here, the great proprietor of all. In other countries there are the revenues of the state for public purposes, out of which is allotted a civil list for the use and maintenance of the reigning family; here, the public revenue and the public disbursements merge as completely in him as if it was a private estate. Here is no parliament to vote supplies, or cabinet-council of ministers to declare war; a single ukase is sufficient for the first, and a supreme will for the second. What is called the senate has no concern with politics; it is a mere deliberative assembly, to hear appeals from the minor courts of justice, and is occupied with questions of internal arrangements for maintaining order in the provinces. The Emperor is the sole director of the foreign relations abroad, the sole source of honours and emoluments at home. Each minister of state comes to him separately with his portfolio

under his arm, and transacts the business of his department under his superintendence.

The army, the navy, the civil servants, the public institutions, only form a part of his establishment; and, gigantic as the scale must be, the whole is submitted to his inspection: you may therefore judge of the boundless activity which forms a striking feature in his character. It must be impossible for one man to scrutinize such vast details; but he is indefatigable in his researches; and though surrounded by corruption in all its shapes, whenever he can lay his finger on a delinquent, be he high or low, he makes a sudden example of him, which terrifies and keeps the others on the alert.

The following circumstance has just occurred, which may give a sample of his energy and vigour, even in what may be called a trifling instance. It is to be supposed that some previous hint had been given him of frauds practised in the management of the great military hospital, and particularly of false charges made by the officer of that establishment who superintended the burials of the dead, for each of which a certain sum is allowed by government. The Emperor, with-

out appearing to notice the information, ordered his horse the other morning, and proposed to Prince Albert of Prussia, who is here on a visit to his sister, the Empress, to accompany him in his ride. He directed his course, as if by chance, towards the hospital, where he arrived precisely at the moment when the gates were opened, and a funeral came out on its way to the place of interment. He stopped the humble procession, and instantly gave orders for the coffin to be uncovered, when it was at once ascertained that two dead bodies had been packed into it, in order that the director might pocket the sum allowed for the second funeral. Nicholas immediately sent for the wretched delinquent, and dismissed him from his office; but with such a severe reprimand, that he went home and cut his throat, where he now lies in a hopeless situation.

As the state is constituted,—one master alone opposed to millions of dependents,—fear must be the groundwork of authority; and this Emperor has had the address to inspire it very generally, without giving any grounds for complaint of cruelty or oppression. No one better knows the canker which

surrounds him; no one can be more eager to extirpate it; his wish to do right is acknowledged by all, even by those who are interested in counteracting his views: but he who has seen a brother die of a broken heart, from the forward ingratitude of a people whose welfare and happiness were the primary object of his existence, may well be justified in enforcing his own salutary government by means more rigorous and determined than those of his predecessor. When to this resolute character in public life, may be added the amiable and domestic virtues of a private citizen, you will agree with me, that few sovereigns can be compared to him.

It is impossible to say the same of his brother, the Grand-duke Constantine, whose impetuous, domineering temper has made him many enemies, and who is little likely to conciliate the Poles to the Russian yoke. His first wife was a princess of the house of Saxe-Cobourg, whose life was short and wretched; indeed, the German princesses have not been fortunate in their alliances with this country. Sophia of Brunswick, who married the Czarowitz Alexis; next, the Regent Anne, the luckless mother of Ivan III.; then the two

wives of Paul,—Natalie of Darmstadt, and Maria of Wirtemberg,—have all had good reason to regret the connexion: the only exceptions to be cited are, Elizabeth of Baden, the wife of Alexander; and the present Empress, whose happiness is apparent to all.

No money is seen in circulation here, all is paper; blue, red, and white notes, torn and dirty, represent five, ten, and twenty-five roubles, &c.; they are the only medium of change, which never varies: an attempt to circulate foreign gold coin would be attended with great loss, as you would never obtain its real value. There exists a law to prevent this paper-money from being carried out of the country, and what may appear paradoxical, another to confiscate it if afterwards attempted to be introduced again. The rouble which, in former times, was worth from thirty-six to forty pence English, is now only worth ten-pence in its paper shape. We have seen the time in England when a one-pound note was not intrinsically worth more than fourteen shillings; but here the depreciation, owing to the enormous issues* of paper, is far

* These issues now amount to near four times the value of the serfs of the crown, who were originally pledged to the public as a security for the payment.

more serious, the silver rouble being equal to three and a-half or four roubles of the latter. This paper-money has one advantage, that it never varies in value, but the original silver coin fluctuates daily, and is, therefore, almost entirely driven out of circulation in the common purposes of barter.

There is little appearance in the shops, and few things are to be bought here, which may not be found better and cheaper in other places. Cachemire shawls are very dear, their furs generally exorbitant—a mere collar of beaver-skin for a great coat will cost two hundred roubles,—but the *curious* in tea may be amply gratified; the greatest variety is brought here overland from China, and is sold at prices unknown with us; the finer sorts will cost from forty, fifty, to one hundred roubles per pound, and are a real curiosity. The smoker will find here the best and handsomest pipes in Europe; they are reckoned superior to those in Turkey, and far beyond the German manufacture; the mouthpieces are all made of amber, and they sell at high prices. If you add to these the curious fabric at Toulâ of steel and silver mixed, the secret of which is hitherto un-

discovered, and the embroidered boots from Moscow and the Asiatic frontier, there is nothing else worthy of mention.

The Russian tradesmen openly confess that they are rogues, and will always ask even double the price which they are prepared to take; the foreigners are equally exorbitant, but more stubborn in reduction; indeed, the demand for articles of luxury is now so limited here, that a German tailor, who works for the court, told me frankly he must have large profits on the small consumption in order to live. There are many French milliners in Petersburg, as the Russian ladies adopt rigorously the modes from Paris, and, in general, are very well dressed when they go into public; but these make bitter complaints of long standing bills and dilatory payments, which prevent them from realizing their profits and returning home. They must make up their minds to settle here for life. Opposite to the windows of my hotel is the residence of Madame —, the most fashionable modiste of the day in Petersburg; from twelve till three o'clock her door is besieged with visitors; carriages with four horses arrive in succession one after the other, and if her receipts bear any proportion

to the number of her fair customers, she must be in the way of making a large fortune; but her confessions to me were very unsatisfactory.

Adieu!

LETTER XIV.

A Russian Wedding.—Funerals.—Baptism.—Education.—Ruined Fortunes.—Private habits of the Emperor.—Reserve in the character of the Russians.—Count S. Potocki.—Dulness and Gloom of St. Petersburg.—Police Spies.—Inflexibility of Nicholas.—The Russian Peasant.—The Greek Church.—Convents in Russia.—Russian Vices.—The Climate.

Petersburg, 24th January, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

I HAD a very natural wish to see a Russian wedding, and it was soon gratified. Count ———, brother to him whom I had the pleasure to know in Paris, very kindly invited me to accompany him the other evening to the marriage of Colonel ——— with Mademoiselle ———. The history of the parties was simple enough, and too frequent, perhaps, in all countries: it was a *mariage de convenance*. We found the chapel brilliantly

lighted up; two small altars were raised in the centre, on which were placed the cup of wine, two coronets of gold, the holy gospel, and a consecrated image, which was afterwards to be removed to the nuptial chamber. The mutual friends were assembled, and formed a circle in their usual dress, the relations only being in full uniform, with their cordons and decorations. The bridegroom arrived first and joined the group, who were eager to express their congratulations on the occasion: in a short time appeared the bride, attended by her family, and the usual attendants. It would be rare to see a handsomer person: she was dressed in white, with much taste and simplicity; the long veil flowed round her shoulders, and the usual emblem of marriage, a *bouquet* of orange flowers, graced her bosom.

They were placed before the altars in face of the Pope; to each was given a lighted taper, and the service began with a grand chorus from the *chantres de la cour*. During this commencement the bride appeared to be much agitated; but she soon mastered her emotion, though the heaving bosom and the trembling taper still gave evidence of the internal struggle. The questions and replies,

together with the interchange of rings, correspond with the rites of other churches; but there is one ceremony peculiar to the Greek church, which is at once symbolical and affecting. The Pope takes the cup of wine, and invites the betrothed pair to drink of it alternately, as a tacit engagement to share in common the good and evil of their future lives; this idea is also renewed, when they walk three times round the altars, arm-in-arm, while the golden coronets are held over their heads by the assistants. The benediction is then pronounced, the new-married couple are led to the holy place, where they kiss the pictures of the saints, and the ceremony is finished.

In any other country it would be supposed, that when a lovely person like *Made-moiselle* — was sacrificed at the altar by her friends, their object must have been to secure a rich and noble husband for a portionless daughter. But this was not the case; she had an independent fortune, and her future husband had neither title, connexions, nor a rouble beyond his pay. But here the epaulette is every thing. He was a colonel in the army, and military rank is the only acknowledged grade in the state; she was

thrown into the arms of a man, her inferior in every point, with her feelings perhaps already devoted to another, solely and simply that she might acquire an ascertained rank in the scale of Russian society.

The funerals here, in particular instances, are very magnificent; long processions of priests, choristers, and mourners,—with standard-bearers, are headed by a man bearing the cross, and other emblems of religion. The body is conveyed in a coffin, generally of some lively colour, on an open car or hearse: when carried into the church, the lid is taken off, and the corpse exposed to public view during the service.

On all occasions it is the custom to place a certificate, signed by the priest, in one hand of the deceased, and in the other a sum of money, varying according to his rank, from two copecks to ten roubles, which must be a remnant of the old Pagan fee to Charon.

As we are on the chapter of ceremonies, I ought to touch upon baptism, which is always performed by immersion. In the rich houses, two tables are laid out in the drawing-room, by the priests; one is covered with holy images, on the other is placed an enormous silver basin, filled with water sur-

rounded by small wax tapers. The chief-priest begins by consecrating the font, and plunging a silver cross repeatedly in the water; he then takes the child, and, after reciting certain prayers, undresses it completely. The process of immersion takes place twice, and so rigorously, that the head must disappear under the water; the infant is then restored to its nurse, and the sacrament is finally administered. In former times, when a child had the misfortune to be born in winter, it was plunged without pity under the ice, or into water of the same temperature. In the present day, that rigour has been relaxed by permission of the church, and warm water substituted for the other; but the common people still adhere scrupulously to the ancient practice in all seasons. On these occasions numbers of children are baptized at the same time on the ice, and the cold often proves fatal to them. It sometimes happens, also, that a child slips through the hands of the priest, and is lost, in which case he only exclaims, "God has been pleased to take this infant to himself: hand me another;" and the poor people submit to their loss without a murmur, as the dispensation of Heaven.

The state superintends generally, as you have seen, the education of the young men; but that of the daughters remains with their family. There is no lack of teachers in the house, and the Russian young women of rank are in general highly accomplished. They speak at least two or three foreign languages fluently: in drawing, music, and dancing, they are often proficient; but no care seems to be taken to give them the slightest idea, I will not say of house-keeping, but even of the value of money in common expenses. If, therefore, they have not large fortunes themselves, which is a rare occurrence, or do not make brilliant marriages, which every day become more unfrequent, they are little calculated to struggle hereafter through the difficulties of life, or to make the most of a small income with a husband, whose time must be engrossed with the duties of his profession.

In England and France, we see young women of high rank, who have been accustomed to all the luxuries of wealth from their infancy, conform cheerfully to the limited circumstances of a husband, and strive by order and regularity to arrange a comfortable home; but I fear a Russian education is

little calculated to make young ladies good economists.

There is no country, with the exception, perhaps, of Italy, which abounds with so many ruined fortunes as Russia; and in no two places are the women brought up with ideas so little calculated to sustain privations, or to cope with the difficulties of a scanty income.

We have been used to impute *the far niente* propensity in the Italian ladies to the enervating effects of a southern climate; but, when we find it equally preponderant under the Frigid Zone, we can no longer trace it to the atmosphere, except upon the principle that *les deux extremes se rencontrent*.

Horace Walpole once remarked, on seeing a young lady in Paris, who was much admired in society for her brilliant talents and accomplishments, *Tout ça est bien gentil, mais qu'est ce qu'on fait de ça à la maison*.

The private habits of the Emperor are tranquil and domestic; that portion of his time which is not devoted to business, is passed with the Empress and his family like a *bon bourgeois*. The crown, therefore, with all its wealth and powers of hospitality, gives very few fêtes to enliven the gloom which

broods over society in Petersburg. The natives follow his example, and give very few entertainments themselves. Their meetings are formal; but it is a general remark amongst foreigners, that though on a first introduction their manners are cordial and prepossessing, they never lead to any farther intimacy.

I have been frequently told by men who have been here for several years—men of the world, and diplomatists, who have frequented the best society in Europe, that they have not only never formed a friendship with a Russian, but never found that they advanced a step in familiarity or intercourse with them, beyond the gracious reception which they received on the first day of their acquaintance. This is a trait peculiar to the Russian character, and I believe does not arise from a feeling of inhospitality, or coldness, but is owing to that unceasing *gêne* and anxiety under which all labour, when in the presence, or even in the neighbourhood, of the sovereign.

I have met with many Russians in London and Paris who were quite the reverse, who were agreeable companions, fond of society, open and friendly in their dispositions.

I need only notice Count S. Potocki,* as an instance, who himself was the promoter of gaiety in all around him, and seemed not to have a care in the world except to make friends, and enliven society. View them and him here, they seem at once transformed by the wand of a magician into different beings; they become reserved, cautious, pre-occupied with some secret source of anxiety, which preys incessantly on the mind, and depresses the spirits, unfitting them for all the common enjoyments of life, and making them alike indifferent to the attractions of pleasure, or the charms of familiar intercourse. This *incubus* is every where predominant,—it pervades the palace and the cottage, but in different degrees. The courtier enjoys it in all its plenitude; and this magnificent city is become one great temple of dulness and ennui. Think not, however, that this feeling of awe is displeasing to the Emperor, or that he would wish to see the manners of his subjects more easy and less constrained; it tallies

* The untimely death of this amiable nobleman, who fell a victim to the cholera at Warsaw, created a feeling of sincere regret through a wider circle of personal friends, in Europe, than it often falls to the lot of any private individual to excite out of his own country.

completely with the two great objects which, by the nature of his position, he is compelled to keep constantly in view, to increase the dread of his power, and curb a proud aristocracy, which, if not ruled with a rod of iron, would finish by ruling him.

Though hedged in by this *chevaux-de-frise* of fear and respect, it does not at all follow that the Emperor should turn a deaf ear to frank and honest counsel or remonstrance, even when opposed to his own opinions, if the intention be evidently good, and the manner respectful. He has been known on many occasions to listen with great condescension, and to adopt measures which, upon calm reflection, he judged to be preferable to his own. The difficulty would rather be, in the present state of servility, to find a man with sufficient moral courage, and independent spirit, to risk such a step, than to apprehend any ill success from the generosity of Nicholas.—But such men are not wanting in Russia.

A friend of mine said to me the other day, “I know that we are surrounded by spies from the police; that every word is eagerly caught up, and retailed sometimes to our disadvantage; but if I had really used an un-

guarded expression, or done any act which might be misconstrued, I would go at once to the Emperor, and state the real facts myself, with full confidence that from his knowledge of my character, he would treat the affair as lightly as I should do myself."

There is one instance, which I shall have occasion to mention in a future letter, when I touch upon the late conspiracy, which will prove that the Emperor could not only listen with attention to the free-spoken counsels of an enemy, but could even adopt them with gratitude.

In such cases, however, as in others, any departure from that personal respect which is due to the sovereign would always be visited with severity. The Emperor knows the national character perfectly, and he wisely avoids the ill-judged lenity and forbearance of his predecessor, which produced such fatal consequences to himself.

Two instances have occurred since my arrival, in which he has been inflexible. General —, the late governor of R—, and General —, a valuable officer in the army, both in the warmth of their remonstrances on some subject or other, departed from that respectful demeanour to the Em-

peror which is prescriptive here, and were instantly dismissed from the service. Nicholas was fully sensible of their merits, valued them both highly, but still was inexorable; and, when he gave the government of R—— to that highly distinguished officer, General P——, in order to give a public testimony of that feeling, he expressed to him a hope, that he would fulfil the duties of his new situation with as much zeal as his predecessor.

The failing of the other dismissed General was an irresistible impulse to make unpleasant remarks to others, and this unfortunate disposition at last implicated him with his sovereign. An anecdote is mentioned of him here which may illustrate that propensity. An officer who was under his command, made, during an engagement, a very skilful and fortunate manœuvre with his regiment, which decided the success of the day. General ——, wishing really to compliment him on his exploit, remarked to him, that his manœuvre was excellent; in fact, so well combined, that he did not think he had the sense to comprehend how scientific it was.

The Mougik, or Russian peasant, is kind and docile; he likes spirits to excess, but his

intoxication is only hurtful to himself; it rather produces torpor than excitement: he falls asleep in the street, and is frozen to death; but he never disturbs the public tranquillity by drunken brawls. He is ignorant—few can either read or write—but his intellect is shrewd and acute: ask him a question, he will give a smart reply; seek his opinion on any subject, and you will frequently be surprised by the depth of his remark. He has a religion of his own, much of which consists in outward signs; he crosses himself every morning before he begins his work, and never passes a church without the same salutation of respect: he seems the creature of his position, and to have no wish beyond it. This respect for religion is very general in Russia, and is not limited to their own, but extends to all other creeds and sects. The Greek religion is the religion of the state, but every other is tolerated, and there are few sects in Europe who have not their proselytes in this vast empire. This is a liberal way of thinking, seldom found in a barbarous country. Like the Roman emperors of old, the sovereign here unites in his own person the imperial and pontifical dignities. In his quality of supreme head of the church, the Em-

peror can only marry a princess who professes the same belief, or has abjured her primitive religion. The next in religious importance to the Emperor is the Archymandrite, or Archbishop of all Russia; then the priestly hierarchy, and the Popes, who perform the regular duties of the sacred profession. The holy writings are still preserved in the Slavonian language, which is the root of the Russian and Polish.

The convents in Russia are numerous, and, in general, present a very picturesque appearance, with their Asiatic cupolas, and the battlements which surround them. This latter precaution was formerly indispensable to protect them from the inroads of the Tartar tribes. The churches are still more numerous; in Moscow alone were reckoned *sorok sorokof*, or forty times forty, steeples; and even in the humble village you may sometimes meet with splendid temples, which recall to mind those of Pagan antiquity. The religious ceremonies are celebrated with great pomp; the robes of the priests are very splendid; and the Russians, of the Greek communion, count many festivals in their calendar, to which they adhere very scrupulously.

One is at a loss to reconcile this regard

for religion, with the marked propensity which the Russian exhibits for certain habits, not of the most moral description. I have alluded to his intemperance, but I am sorry to add, that thieving, dissimulation, and a few other little defects, of the same nature, form an integral part of the national character. The habit of privately stealing is so inveterate, and so notorious, even from their origin, that towards the middle of the seventeenth century the traveller Oleabius pleasantly remarked, "If you wish to know whether a Russian is a man of probity, examine whether hair grows in the palm of his hand, as it is the only sign of it amongst them." The bump of appropriativeness must be very prominent on their heads, if there is any truth in phrenology. The system is very general, and is practised with great effrontery. Peter the Great seemed well aware of their dexterity, when he defied the Jews to circumvent his own subjects. The following anecdote is related of a criminal, condemned to the knout, who was marching to the place of execution. He privately approached to the executioner, and whispered in his ear, "Brother, if you will moderate your stripes, and spare my back, these five hundred roubles

in paper are yours, and I solemnly promise you another sum of equal amount after the operation." Mr. *Ketch* concludes the treaty, takes the advance, and fulfils his part of the engagement. On his return home, overjoyed with his prize, he takes a nearer view of the notes, and finds on examination that they are all forged. Such effrontery can hardly be conceived at such a moment, and is remarkable as a trait of character.

Notwithstanding the rigorous severity of this climate, it is curious to observe how few seem to suffer under its pernicious influence, and how seldom you see an object in the streets maimed or disfigured by the frost. I met one, indeed, yesterday, and I mention it as a rare occurrence, who had lost both his hands by the cold, and their place was supplied by two iron hooks, which reduced him, like Horace's father, to the necessity of wiping his nose with his elbow. Suetonius mentions that the poet was of very low extraction, the son of a *Salsamentarius*, or fish-salter, whose hands, being all day immersed in the brine-tub, would have flayed his nose by the contact, and left him no other resource. Whenever his enemies wished to taunt Horace with his humble birth, they would sarcastically ob-

serve, "*Quoties ego vidi patrem tuum cubito emungentem.*"—Milton, also, uses the same expression in those bitter lines which he wrote against Salmatius, the advocate of Charles I., beginning with "*Gaudete rhomhi,*" Rejoice, ye turbots!

Yours ever.

LETTER XV.

The English Quay and Chapel.—The English consul.—The English Ambassador.—Foreign Corps diplomatique.—Russian Carnival.—Masked Divertissement.—Malleability of the Russians.—Their genius for Music.—Their love of servitude.—Cupidity of Slave-masters.—Russian Literature.—Printing in Russia.

Petersburg, 27th January, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

ON the banks of the Neva, commanding a fine view of the fortress, and of that quarter of the city which is on the opposite side of the river, is a long range of well-built houses, called the English Line, or Quay, on which a part of the factory still reside, though it was originally intended for the occupation entirely of that colony. Here also is the English Chapel, which is fitted up not only handsomely, but in very good taste; the chaplain-

cy is worth £800 per annum, with a good house, and the use of a tolerable library, which, when the price of provisions is considered, must make the appointment as good as the generality of livings in England of double that value.

The Consul's emoluments are superior to those in any other country. I have heard them rated at 100,000 roubles per annum, including the Hanoverian agency: this situation is held by Sir Daniel Bayley, Knt., which he obtained through the interest of Mr. Samuel Thornton, his late partner in London. The society of these few families is limited to each other; they have little intercourse with the Russians, and do not seem forward in showing hospitality to strangers.

One of the best houses in this line is occupied by the English embassy, and I should be very ungrateful if I did not mention the kind and hospitable reception which I experienced under that roof. I brought with me no letter of introduction to Lord H——, and knew him only by that name, which had acquired a European celebrity; but from the first day of my arrival I was received with a cordiality and frankness, which gave a double value to his repeated invitations, and great

kindness upon all occasions.* He is a great favourite of the Emperor, who takes every opportunity of expressing his real regard for

* The successor of Lord H——, though differing widely from him in politics, has also been very fortunate in conciliating the esteem of the Emperor. Few ambassadors have ever been sent to a foreign country under greater disadvantages than those which attended the Earl of D——, in his first mission to Russia. The active part which he had taken under Earl Grey's government, in the sudden measures of Reform, and the exaggerated reputation for ultra-liberal principles which had preceded him at St. Petersburg, were not calculated to inspire the Emperor at first with any very strong feelings in his favour; but his open manly character, his talents, and his peculiarly high-bred manners, soon dispersed the prejudice, and conciliated the personal regard and esteem of that sovereign. His second embassy, therefore, was commenced under much more favourable auspices, and it is only justice to say, that his activity availed itself of those circumstances to forward the interests of England on all occasions. The late modification of duties on English commodities, though partly owing to the great improvement in Russian manufactures, may still be also imputed to his earnest interference, though the jealousy of our French neighbours pretends to deny it: but in another late affair, which has been kept more secret, at least as far as the negotiations are concerned, Lord D—— contributed mainly to extricate his own government out of a dilemma, which might have led to very serious consequences. When a cabinet commences with oblique hints of menace, which it does not feel itself competent to enforce when brought to the test, it may require a skilful negotiator to qualify hasty expressions, and secure a retreat with honour, though founded on a tardy legal opinion which puts us in the wrong.

It will soon appear that this affair of the Vixen was nothing more than a mischievous manœuvre, got up by the Anglo-Polish party in London, with no other view than to embroil the two countries, and to produce a war with Russia.

him; and he has studied this nation so successfully, that he has obtained the most accurate knowledge of their views and character. The foreign corps diplomatique at Petersburg are naturally thrown much together in a capital where the natives contribute so little to society. The Duc de Mortemart is the French ambassador here: he is not very popular, it is said, with the Russians, on account of some private theatricals given at his hotel, which were considered as personal; but I believe this to be mere ill-natured gossip. Count Fiquelmont is the ambassador from Austria, Monsieur de Paez from Spain, Count Ludolph from Naples, Mr. Palmystern from Sweden, and Mr. Haeckert from Holland. These foreign representatives are seldom invited to court, private balls are sometimes given by the Emperor to his subjects, but the strangers are always excluded.

We are now in the Russian carnival, during which some few entertainments will be given, and it is considered as the scene of Russian gaiety for the year. On Sundays, at this period, the Emperor gives a *soirée*, which lasts from eight to ten, at the Hermitage, to which the three ambassadors of England, France, and Austria, are occasionally invited,

with their ladies; but none of the envoys or ministers from other courts. It is said to be formal and dull to those who attend, and creates a blank in the public amusements of the evening, as the performers of both the French and Italian theatres are commanded to act before the imperial family at the palace, and the public theatres are therefore shut up. A circumstance, however, has just transpired, which, whether from the doubtful success resulting from it, or a wish to avoid satirical comments, the actors themselves have used every effort to keep a secret; and as any allusion to it has been carefully avoided in society, the story itself is not generally known here. The Emperor has retired during the holidays with his family to the Anitchkoff palace, where he lives in a quiet, unostentatious manner—calls the Empress, in joke, Madame Nicholas, and only comes occasionally to the Winter Palace for a few hours on the days of ceremony, or public reception.

It was proposed among the great officers of state, and of the household, to amuse the Imperial family with the sudden arrival of a masked *divertissement travestie*, on twelfth night. The characters were all taken from

the ancient mythology. I wish I could give you all the dramatis personæ, but the following may enable you to form an idea of the inverted mode, in which the heathen divinities were personified.

Diana.—Count S. P——. You are acquainted with his person, which is sufficient. The nine Muses in her train enacted by nine stout and corpulent officers.

Venus.—The Prince Y——, nearly of the same proportions.

Three Graces.—Count L——, who is very old, and nearly blind, with two contemporaries.

Hercules.—Madame A——, who has nearly the slightest figure in Petersburg.

Vulcan.—Madame Z——, a very handsome and graceful woman.

Time.—Was to have been acted by a little child, who was taken ill, and unable to attend; of which circumstance Vulcan availed herself, when out in her part, by saying, "*Le Temps nous a manqué*."

Diana appeared leading in the Emperor's favourite dog, Hussar,—and all recited some appropriate verses in Russian and in French the former were written by Pouchkin, and the latter by Monsieur B—— of the ——

embassy. There is a malicious report of *ten* Muses, owing to a similar mistake made by Count Romanzow on the frieze in front of the great library which he built on the English Quay; but the world is so ill-natured that they will say any thing. It does not appear that the result of this performance quite answered the expectations which the actors had promised to themselves. The *on dit* is,—*l'Imperatrice a été plus étonnée qu'amusée. L'Empereur a souri avec bienveillance à un effort, il est vrai un peu grotesque; pour attirer ses augustes regards.* Perhaps, it also gratified him in a political point of view. At all events it was a singular exhibition, when the ages generally of the individuals concerned, and the reserved conduct uniformly maintained here in presence of the sovereign, are taken into consideration. Moliere would say to these courtiers,—

Allons ferme, poussez, mes bons amis de cour,
Vous n'en épargnez point, et chacun a son tour.

Mirabeau remarked in his time, that the Russian people were the most malleable race that ever existed; and it is a very just definition of their character. Look at a young mougik; when first taken from his paternal

cabin, he is awkward, timid,—in fact, little removed from the savage: two months are sufficient to transform him into a good soldier, or an active servant. The process of education is, perhaps, melancholy to relate, and difficult to believe, but it is efficacious. The cane and the whip perform the miracle in most instances.

A master will say to his slave, “You must be a musician;” to another, “You must be a tailor.” If either murmurs, he is beat; and this method is continued till the one produces a tolerable coat, or the other sings a national air in good tune, or can join in a chorus. It is with these crude materials that the Russians have found the secret of organizing their great military force. The peasant, before he is completely formed to the profession of a soldier, undergoes privations and sufferings innumerable; but this ordeal once passed, he acquires a constitution of iron; like the cement, which becomes more hard from exposure to the open air, the Russian soldier is hardy, indefatigable, proof against the inclemencies of the seasons, enduring hunger and thirst with patience, and fearing more the cane of his officer than the cannon of the enemy. The impassibility of

the Muscovite under fire is almost proverbial; and if passive, mechanical courage, is the essence of a good soldier, it is certainly to be found in the Russian ranks.

The nation has undoubtedly a genius for music. Many of the old nobles at Moscow have a complete orchestra in their palaces, formed out of the numerous servants in their establishments. Their natural talent has indeed been improved by instruction; but in the wild steppes, and barbarous provinces, the Russian peasant will himself fabricate his own *balaleika*, a species of mandoline, and accompany it with his voice, in notes of a very wild but pleasing melody. The musicians at all the public theatres are originally taken from this class, and are very good performers. One anecdote will show the general indisposition which exists even in these artists to break the bonds of servitude.

At the national theatre of Moscow, after the curtain had dropped, an actor stepped forward to announce to the public, that he had purchased his liberty, and was about to leave the stage. This circumstance, from its rarity, created much conversation at the moment, and the question was asked of a musician present, why he did not follow such a

laudable example. "Ah!" replied he, with a sigh, "Serf God has made me, serf I have lived, and serf I shall die. While I continue punctually to pay my *abrok* to my master, he is under the obligation to lodge, to feed me, my wife, and my children, when in health, and to take care of us when sick. Would liberty then procure to us equivalent advantages, when reduced to the scanty salary of one hundred and fifty roubles, which is all I receive from the managers of this theatre? In my position as a slave, I am readily admitted to a secondary situation in the orchestra, but as a freedman, it would be a different thing,—my talents would be questioned, and my pretensions viewed with jealousy. No, no! serf I was born, serf I have lived, and serf I will die."

This sentiment is much more generally prevalent than the world imagines. A feeling of immediate personal interest stifles in this humble race those aspirations for liberty which nature must have implanted in their breasts, in common with her other children; and, if any doubt could exist on that subject, it vanishes at once in the institution of an annual fête, when the natural bias is expressed in a very affecting manner.

On that day the people hurry in crowds to the market-place, anxious to purchase all the birds that are on sale, and restore them to their native air, amidst the joyous cheers of the assembled multitude. There is something melancholy in this allegorical allusion to their own hapless position.

It is not so much in Petersburg, as in the provinces of the interior, that the slaves are subjected to very humiliating acts of servitude; there the master, free from observation, listens only to the dictates of his own caprice, and treats them often with cruelty and oppression. Much has been done by the last two Emperors to repress this system of domestic tyranny, but it is easy to conceive the facility with which these salutary regulations may be evaded by those who are far removed from the seat of government.

The slave as a mechanic is clever and industrious; not inventive, but successful in imitation, though his talent is cried down by those who ought to encourage it.

In all the shops and bazars the tradesmen are anxious to recommend their wares as of foreign manufacture. The common remark on every thing ill-executed is, that it is Russian workmanship; but I believe many arti-

cles are sold as English or French which have been fabricated at home. This is done chiefly to attract the Russian nobles themselves, who, though well able to appreciate the works of art, have a natural prejudice against the produce of the indigenous industry, and have a great partiality for every thing that comes from abroad. The same will apply also to foreign artists, even of moderate talent, who will often be received with enthusiasm, while a native, with superior acquirements, may remain in obscurity and neglect. But I will not enlarge upon this subject, as it may be equally applicable to our own country.

There is perhaps another cause which tends to check and paralyze the exertions of the Russian slaves, and that is the cupidity of the masters. They often strive in vain to obtain the privilege of working at some handicraft trade, with a view of gaining enough to purchase their liberty; and often does the encroaching boyard disappoint their calculations by seizing the little hoard of his vassals, and appropriating it to his own use. To avoid these oppressive exactions the unfortunate peasants have been known to bury their secret treasure, and to have died before

they could apprise their children of the spot in which it was concealed.

To talk of Russian literature, is to talk of that which does not exist, and never has existed: other countries have had their ancient bards and historians of their early days; but even the chronicles of this country have been handed down from the recollections of their neighbours; and, up to the present time, Russia has never produced a man of erudition who has made any real sensation in the literary world. Pouschkin is now lauded to the skies by his countrymen; but every thing is great by comparison; and they are well aware that they need fear no contradiction, while their own language is *lettre close* to the rest of Europe. There is, I see, a growing propensity to novel writing; but two or three of these productions which I have read in a *French garb*, possess little talent or originality. They are, evidently, feeble imitations of the German or Parisian school, without any forcible delineations of character: they abound in common-place incident, show little knowledge of real life, and disdain to give the reader any information on that point which would be really new and interesting—the every-day habits and occupations of Russian life.

It may be, and still is urged, that Russia is only in her infancy; but then look around at America, who, in point of date, is a new-born child to the former, and see the rapid strides which education and genius have there made under the fostering help of free institutions. Russia, in her present extended form, is not in her infancy; she may be likened to an overgrown lad, with the strength of a giant, but still kept in leading-strings, who can deal about sturdy blows to his playmates, but is placed at the bottom of his class, and is learning his rudiments, while they are construing Virgil. And yet, in this backward state of instruction throughout the land, I have heard many thinking persons of the higher classes (and it is evident I do not speak of them, but of the masses) say, "All this is very true; much change must eventually be accomplished,—but, for Heaven's sake, let it be gradual; let not the march of intellect be too rapidly promoted here; we have much more to fear from the sudden introduction of light, than from our present darkness."

This opinion, too, is entertained at a time when all the nations in Europe are entering the lists against each other in the great race

for public improvement, when human intellect becomes daily more expanded, when invention succeeds to invention, when steam has begun its awful progress to assist science, and when a rage for that visionary object, called perfectibility, is gaining ground in every part of the globe. Where is this torrent to stop? At the gates of Polangen, before a dike bristling with bayonets. Is the thing in itself feasible, I would ask? Reason, uninvited perhaps, but a persevering guest, will infallibly arrive; she will sit down before the blue and white posts of the Russian barrier; there she will say in a plaintive tone to the opposing phalanxes,—

*Vous me chassez, mais j'espere
Avoir mon tour, et j'attens;
Car je suis fille du Temps,
Et j'obtiens tout de mon père.*

If there are no writers of importance in Russia, there are also no translators;* the

* Since these letters were written, an impulse has been given to Russian literature. In the year 1836, six hundred and seventy-four original works, and one hundred and twenty-four translations were published in Russia. This number of books greatly exceeds that of 1835, and denotes the progress of mental improvement. Scientific works, dramas, and school books, seem to have increased, and, on the other hand, novels and romances have decreased. Three hundred and fifty thousand volumes of foreign books were imported into Russia in that year, one-half of which were bought at St. Petersburg.

few, therefore, who have a taste for study, and a wish to become acquainted with foreign works, must read them in the original language, which is always a great advantage. For this the Russians have peculiar facilities, as their aptness in learning foreign tongues is remarkable. With some few exceptions, what translation can be cited that has ever rendered the proper spirit of the original? The great masterpieces of writing, which have a characteristic type of their own, are untranslatable; Horace, Juvenal, Shakespeare, Racine, Dante, Ariosto, are almost unintelligible to those who have not studied them in their natural form; and then, out of the mass of translators, how few of them are qualified for the office? The first and chief requisite is in itself a rarity, which is, the power not only of writing fluently, but of thinking profoundly, in two different languages; the next is, that of entering with feeling into the genius and conceptions of the author before you; this, perhaps, is even more difficult. The Romans seem to have held translators in little value, as they have not left us one translation from the Greek which may rank amongst the classics.

The art of printing is as well known in

Russia as in other countries, but from the unlettered state of the inhabitants, and the rigorous censure established by the government, it is far from producing the same results as in Europe. It will, probably in time, be the means of civilizing this vast empire, and by that time, perhaps, may be conducting us back to barbarism; such is the fate of sublunary rotations! You may call it a rhapsody, but the present abuse of printing may finish by vitiating public taste, and undermining the foundations of literature. As an engine, the press is tremendous in whichever way it may work; it is passive without intelligence, it is obedient without judgment; it propagates both the good and the bad; it has imparted vast information, but it disseminates myriads of errors and follies; and as the number of judicious and enlightened writers is very small, when compared to that of the opposite class, there is no end to the deluge of mischief, ignorance, and trash, which is now pouring in upon us.

It is like the excess in opium and dram-drinking,—it may stimulate life, but it hastens death.

Yours ever.

THE

CITY OF THE CZAR;

OR, A

VISIT TO ST. PETERSBURG,

IN

THE WINTER OF 1829-30.

BY THOMAS RAIKES, ESQ.

A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
And faith he'll prent 'em. BURNS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Petersburg, 5th February, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

IT is a singular circumstance, but not the less true, that some of the best rudiments for governing this impracticable people were imparted to the Emperor at his accession, by one of the chief conspirators in the year 1825. The plot had been brewing against the government for several years previously to its explosion; its existence was well known to

Alexander through divers channels, and, though the natural lenity of his character prevented him from adopting any rigorous measures to sift the affair to the bottom, his apprehensions on the subject had tended very much to embitter the latter period of his existence. Its precise object seems never to have been exactly defined even by the authors. It originated, doubtless, with the nobles, in a wish to relieve themselves from their despotic dependence on the crown, and in a dread of those measures for emancipating the serfs, which the liberal spirit of Alexander was anxious to enforce, and which they considered as trenching on their rights, and invading their properties.

A portion of the army was engaged in the cause, which necessarily included the implication of numberless young men, who, with less prudence and more enthusiasm than the original promoters, gave greater latitude to their views, and contemplated a more decided overthrow of the whole system. It is now confidently but privately asserted, that they had determined on murdering, not only the Imperial family, but the whole foreign *corps diplomatique*, in order that they might, in case of success, free themselves at once from all

interference of other nations. Rebellion in Russia has never been unaccompanied with bloodshed, and in no country under the sun is human life considered of so little value.

The previous campaigns in Europe had probably introduced new-fangled ideas of liberty in Russia, as the American war had formerly infused the same spirit into France, but with this difference in the result, that the Russian conspirator sought emancipation only for himself, and a confirmation of slavery to his fellow-subjects.

The contagion, no doubt, had spread very widely, but the systematic projects of the original authors were lost in the wild theories of the young and newly-initiated members; and while the tail of the conspiracy increased in strength and numbers, the head became gradually eclipsed.

Numberless instances of mad boasting and incautious conduct occurred in society. Sanguine young men, who felt themselves inspired to enact the parts of Brutus and Cassius, had the indiscretion to utter dark hints in public, and predict events, which were fortunately doomed to be stifled in their birth.

The public mind was alarmed at a state of

things so novel in Petersburg, where the liberty of speech had always been subjected to such severe restraint; and every one looked at his neighbour in awful expectation of serious reprisals on the part of government. But Alexander was absent; he was either travelling in the Crimea, or shut up in retirement. He disdained to notice, though he must have known, these hair-brained *fan-faronnades*, and the authors remained unpunished.

The conspiracy itself was deep and dangerous; its growth was fostered by impunity; but two circumstances alone seem to have brought about its failure, and rendered its object abortive. These two circumstances were, the sudden death of Alexander, which rendered imperative its immediate explosion, and the unripe state in which, from a want of fit and unanimous leaders, the whole organization of the plot still continued to exist. Without time to define any absolute plan of operations, without even any decided object in view, or proper leaders selected to head their ill-judged enterprise, it became necessary to throw off the mask at once, and move the troops into action. With such disjointed elements success was barely possible; and

the hurried choice which they made at the moment of P. Trubetzkoy, to lead the attack, who had neither the conduct nor the courage requisite for such a trying occasion, put the finishing stroke to their discomfiture.

The cry of rebellion was raised, and was at once met by Nicholas with unshaken firmness. He had taken every precaution at the moment in rallying round him those officers and troops whose fidelity was unsuspected, and thus displayed a bold front to his adversaries. There was no time for parley; their murderous intentions were soon too apparent, when a volley of musketry was heard, and the brave Miloradovitch, aide-de-camp of the Emperor, was killed by the side of his sovereign. At this time the firmness of mind and bravery of Nicholas became most conspicuous. He advanced in front of the line, and ordered the cannon to be fired on the rebels, which was done with great effect. The craven-heart of Trubetzkoy failed him in the hour of danger; he deserted his post and fled, overcome with fear, to seek refuge in the house of Mr. De Lebezeltern, the Austrian Ambassador, who was his brother-in-law by marriage. After this desertion of their chief, the revolted bands became dis-

heartened, and the fortune of the day was decided. Fresh troops, on whom dependence could be placed, were brought up, and, before two o'clock, the courage and energy of the Emperor had established his authority beyond all doubt.

One of the first effects of returning tranquillity was an order from the Emperor to arrest Trubetzkoy, which was intrusted to Prince Gallitzin. He was dragged from his concealment, and brought to the imperial palace, where his abject submission only rendered his previous conduct more mean and contemptible. Regardless of all those ties which, however bad the cause, had bound him to his former friends and associates, he scrupled not, under the impulse of fear, to betray every secret of the plot in which they had mutually been engaged; he gave up every paper in his possession, and the name of every family, or individual, whom it was in his power to criminate; names, indeed, of high importance, some of which had never been implicated by a rumour of suspicion. Having thus filled up the measure of his treachery, first to his sovereign, and then to his colleagues in rebellion, he exhibited the lowest point at which

human degradation can arrive, by falling at the feet of his imperial master, and begging that his life might be spared. The reply of Nicholas must have intimated to him, if he had any feeling left, the sovereign contempt which his conduct had inspired. "You may live," said he, "if you can think life worth retaining under such circumstances." He was banished to Siberia.

The next step, and the most delicate, which, while it proves the talent and address of the Emperor, speaks not less highly for the magnanimity and real greatness of his character, was the examination of those hitherto unsuspected persons, who had been so meanly betrayed by the recreant Trubetzkoy. Some of these individuals were of superior rank and situation in the empire, belonging to high and noble families, whose names were connected with former brilliant services to the state, which could never be forgotten. Foremost in this class stood Colonel ——. The Emperor summoned him to his presence, totally unconscious of the treachery which had been practised upon him: he then showed him the papers, which were to prove his guilt, and while the abashed culprit stood

conscience-struck in his presence, he nobly threw them *unopened* into the fire. Nicholas then addressed him with the feeling of a friend: he told him that his name was a sufficient guarantee for the future; that he could imagine the past was only a momentary delusion; and that, even if his guilt had not been exaggerated, he himself would never wish to become acquainted with it. He then recommended him to join the army in Persia without delay, to conduct himself there in a manner that might justify this indulgence, and prove to the world by future acts of loyalty and devotion, that all the late rumours attached to his character were unjust and unfounded. He went, and has since distinguished himself on several occasions. Many others were treated with the same delicacy and mercy.

With respect to the more prominent conspirators, it was absolutely requisite that justice should be allowed to take her course, and, after a short investigation, their sentence was formally pronounced. Many officers were imprisoned in the fortress, and then banished to Siberia; five only were condemned to death, among these were Pestell

and Bestucheff, who were most deeply implicated in all the details of this formidable insurrection. They were both young men of superior talents, information, and firmness of character, which would have done honour to a better cause. Rumour spoke highly of the sensible, dispassionate manner, in which Pestell had spoken of the views of the conspirators, and the calm resignation with which he was prepared to meet his fate. This gave the Emperor a wish to have a private interview with him; some say that it was earnestly demanded by the prisoner, with a proposal to make some important revelations; be that as it may, the conference did take place on the day previously to his execution. Pestell prefaced his address to the Emperor by saying, that all distinctions were now levelled between them by his prospect of immediate death; that he himself had nothing more to hope or fear in this world, and whatever he was then about to communicate could be attributed to no bias of an earthly nature. He then, in the fullest manner, disclosed not only every secret of the late conspiracy, but its origin and its objects; not only the causes of present disaffection, but the future mea-

sures which he conceived most calculated to repress it. He entered into a detail of the character of the nation, the mode of government, and the difficulties with which Nicholas was at the moment surrounded; he alluded to the liberal ideas of the late sovereign; his open wish for emancipation, and his predilections for foreigners, which created discontent and jealousies in his own subjects. He allowed that rigour and severity were indispensable in the government, but he strongly recommended a greater conformity to national prejudices.

All these communications, delivered in a manly tone, and with extraordinary composure, brought home to the mind of Nicholas many very serious convictions, and laid open to his view various circumstances, of which he previously had no conception. Impressed with gratitude for such important discoveries, the Emperor repeatedly offered to spare his life, which he invariably refused. "No," said he, "I am not afraid to die, and my life is justly forfeited to my country. You cannot sign my pardon, without committing murder, if you then cause my colleagues to be executed. I may now see my error, but

it is irremediable; and all I wish is to make such atonement, as the short period still remaining to me in this world may permit."

The Emperor, it is said, was very deeply affected; and it does seem to me incomprehensible that he should have allowed such a man to be executed. Every one concurs in thinking, that the dying counsels of Pestell have had great influence in suggesting the energetic conduct of the present reign, which, with all its severity, professes a much more *national spirit* than that which preceded it.

Pestell was hanged on the following day with his accomplices, on the glacis of the fortress. His end was distinguished by the same fortitude and contempt of personal danger, which characterized his whole life. When first suspended on the gallows, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground. On being recovered by the assistants, and replaced again on the scaffold, he only exclaimed to his friends, "*En me laissant pendre, je ne croyois pas risquer de me casser le cou.*"

This was the only public execution on that occasion, though the sentence of banishment for life to hard labour in the mines of

Siberia, which was enforced in various instances, must have been a punishment far more terrible than death. There were other minor gradations of chastisement from which even the fair sex were not exempted. The well known Madame L——, who had taken a share in these treasonable projects, was arrested by the police, and suffered with the rest. She is now restored to favour at court, and quite recovered from the *accident*, as I met her yesterday at dinner, at the embassy, where there was a large party of the Russian nobility, among whom was M——, who is just arrived from England.

The Turkish Embassy, which has been expected for some days past from Adrianople, has just made its appearance in Petersburg. The object of this mission is to express the Sultan's satisfaction at the conclusion of peace between the two countries. The ambassador is named Halib Pacha; his suite consists in all of seventy-five persons; their expenses, while in the Russian territory, are defrayed by the Emperor, and it is calculated that their stay in the country will cost the Imperial treasury one million and a half of paper roubles, which is equal to about sixty

thousand pounds of our money. It must include the presents, which will be sent in return to the Sultan, otherwise the amount is inconceivable.

Yours ever.

LETTER XVII.

Halib Pacha's audience of the Emperor.—Russian Orders.—The Carnival.—A Russian Ball.—Restraint in Society.—Prudes and Coquettes.—Social morals.—Prejudice against mourning.—Prince Yousouppoff.—His appearance at a Ball given by the Duc de Mortemart.—His Wealth.—Anecdote.—Whist-playing, —Gambling anecdotes.

Petersburg, 9th February, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

THIS morning Halib Pacha, attended by his suite, had his formal audience of the Emperor at the Winter Palace. The procession through the streets was very insignificant; six old gilt carriages, of various shapes and dates, some of the time of Catherine, each drawn by six horses, with a few outriders and footmen, constituted the whole cavalcade:

it seemed to excite no interest with the people, and there were very few spectators.

You must have heard so much of Russian orders, and indeed have seen a few on English button-holes, since the last war, that I may venture to give you a list of them. The first order is that of St. Andrew, instituted by Peter I.; the decoration consists of a star and a blue riband, at the bottom of which hangs the cross of St. Andrew. The princes and princesses of the imperial family are members by birth: it is both civil and military, and has no second class. The second order is that of St. Alexander Neusky, instituted also by Peter the Great; the riband is red, and four eagles surround the star: it is also both civil and military, and has no second class. The third is the order of St. George, which is purely military; the riband is red, bordered with black and white; the cross is white, and represents the saint on horseback, piercing a dragon with his lance. This order is the most distinguished in Russia, and the most difficult of attainment; the sovereign himself cannot evade the rigorous injunctions of its statutes. The grand cross can only be conferred on a general who gains a pitched battle, takes a strong fortress, or

contributes, by a series of successful operations, to the re-establishment of peace.

At this time there are only four knights of the first class; the Dauphin of France, the King of Sweden, the Duke of Wellington, and General Beningsen. This order is divided into four classes, and to obtain even the lowest it is necessary to have taken a cannon or a standard from the enemy.

The order of Saint Anne has four classes; the riband is red, bordered with yellow: soldiers, who have served with distinction for twenty years, obtain a medal, bearing the cross of St. Anne, with the riband.

The order of St. Validimir, instituted by Catherine, is civil as well as military, and is composed of four classes; the riband a deep red, with black border. Those who perform a noble or generous action, who save a fellow creature from drowning, or from any great personal danger, are rewarded with this cross; authors too, of valuable works or inventions, may lay claim to this recompense.

Alexander created a medal for those who made the campaign in 1812; the riband is blue, and the medal silver for the military, and bronze for the civil members.

After the military engagements which took

place on the Pruth, Peter I. instituted the order of St. Catherine, in honour of his wife, who had followed him through the whole campaign, and by her courage and presence of mind largely contributed to the fortunate issue of the war: this order is *unique* in Europe from the singularity of its origin. It is conferred solely on noble Russian ladies, and worn below the left shoulder; it is divided into two classes: the riband is red, bordered with white. The cross presents on one side the image of St. Catherine, with the emblems of her martyrdom; and on the other this inscription, "Pour l'amour de la patrie."

We are told it is the Carnival, but I see nothing here which reminds me of it: the times are gone by when the Empress Anne celebrated the marriage of her fool in a palace built of ice, fifty feet long and twenty feet wide, which at night was illuminated with wax candles; while a battery of six cannons, made of the same materials, fired a salute in honour of the bride and bridegroom. Here we have nothing but three feet of snow in the streets, the usual dull theatres, and a few occasional balls, where formality still reigns paramount through the circle, and the ladies, seated by themselves, are not ap-

proached by the men, except for the purpose of the dance. All seem to feel the force of Brunet's remark, "Qu'importe qu'on s'en-nuie, pourvu qu'on s'amuse?" Still a Russian ball is a fine and brilliant spectacle; the capacious hotels—the numerous servants—the suites of splendid rooms, illuminated like day—the various uniforms and orders—the women richly dressed,—and, to crown the whole, a magnificent supper, form, at any rate, a dazzling scene; though the animation of pleasure is wanting, and the *sans gêne* cordiality of manner, which gives a real zest to society, is nowhere to be found. It would be a breach of etiquette to offer your arm to a lady in a ball-room, and any attempt to enter into a continued conversation would be immediately discouraged. The eyes of all are on the alert to remark the slightest deviation from the strict rules of prudery which are established in this society; and as great purity of conduct is enforced both by the example and precepts of the imperial family, a dread of ill-natured comments, which might be reported to the palace, produces a feeling of restraint, and a check upon all frankness and cordiality, which ensures alike to every one the same chilling and formal reception.

Thus, the dread of the throne acts with equal force, but in a different shape, on the conduct and pursuits of both sexes; and if there are coquettes in Petersburg, they are, at least, not visible in public.

Some societies might be benefited by the exclusion of that dangerous animal; but here, if two or three of what the "Spectator" denominates oglers and sparklers were let loose in a ball room, their mischievous qualities would be neutralized by the chill of the surrounding atmosphere, and their animated eyes would enliven the general gloom like diamonds on a sombre velvet robe. Still, after all, a prude is far more estimable than a coquette. The latter is a being devoid of all feeling; her rage for admiration only originates in a wish to impart some artificial warmth to her own frigid nature; she lies in wait for excitement and emotions by calculation, (as a decrepit old man basks at noon in the sunshine to revive his torpid circulation.) But, as all her actions spring from the head and not from the heart, she scruples not to sacrifice real friends and sincere admirers at the shrine of vanity, as a general exposes his most devoted troops to the hottest fire of the

enemy, in order to gain a sometimes unimportant victory.

The morals in society, thus placed under imperial inspection, are, to all appearance, eminently correct; any deviation from such conduct is marked with open displeasure from the chief. A nobleman was lately banished from court because his attachment to a French actress was too notorious; and though no court was more dissipated under the reign of the Empress Catherine, none is more strictly guided by the rules of decorum than that over which the Emperor Nicholas now presides.

There is a great and singular prejudice in this country against mourning; the mournings of the court being indispensable, are unusually short, and often deferred till two or three deaths have occurred, and can be included in one order; but those of individuals are often evaded; and there are certain fête days in families at which no one would commit the indiscretion of appearing in a black coat.

I have had various neighbours in my hotel since my arrival, of whom some curious anecdotes have transpired; but within the last few days great preparation has been making for a

new guest from the interior provinces, Prince Yousoupoff, a great Tartar chief, and one of the richest subjects in Russia. He is possessed of very large estates; on which he occasionally resides in Asiatic splendour and dignity. He arrived in a large antique berline, and his suite in six sledges: the latter was composed of two secretaries and ten servants, a dwarf, who is forty years old, and not higher than my waist, with a whole menagerie of parrots, monkeys, and dogs. The Prince himself is eighty-five years old: he is separated from his wife, whose family name was Engelhardt, a native of Germany, and who is widow of the famous Prince Potemkin: she has a considerable dower, and always resides at Petersburg.

The principal residence of the Prince is at Moscow, where he lives surrounded by regal magnificence; he has a private theatre in his palace, a band of thirty female vocal performers, and another of instrumental music, composed of slaves, to whom he has given the requisite education. It is very seldom that he visits this capital, as the nobles at Moscow retain all their ancient prejudices, bear with impatience the control of a court, dislike all modern, and particularly foreign, innova

tions, and are not supposed, generally, to be very favourable to the imperial government: they are called in this country the Opposition; but it is an opposition backed by tremendous power and wealth, which must make them a formidable object of suspicion.

This venerable satrap went last night to a ball at the Duc de Mortemart's, where he was the object of general remark. He was dressed in precisely the same uniform that he wore in the time of Catherine; indeed, he piques himself on never having changed any thing about him since that period; and though his dress was antique, his manners proved that the *vieille cour* had much more dignity and high breeding than the *nouvelle*. Unlike the rest of his countrymen, he has seen a great deal of the world; and what St. Simon would call *du plus grand, et du meilleur*. It is more than fifty years since he was in England, when he knew Garrick, Sheridan, and other wits of that day; he also travelled with the Emperor Paul during his minority: he was much esteemed by Frederick the Great, who gave him the order of the Black Eagle, which he constantly wears.

Such a man must be a mine of information to connect the last two generations to-

gether; and if all the anecdotes which he has witnessed could be published, it would form a work of the highest interest. A courtier, of the time of Catherine, making his appearance in the present day, dressed in the fashion of that period, gives the idea of an old picture walking out of its frame, or even of one risen from the dead.

His wealth is immense: he has given his son, who has already married his second wife, an independent fortune, and remains himself possessed of one hundred and forty thousand slaves. This species of property is not always easily defined; but, in this instance, I hear it may be estimated at an obrok of forty-five roubles generally per head; the rich paying for the poor, and the young, who can work, paying for the old, who cannot. Those who have migrated from the soil, and betaken themselves to a trade or service, pay dearly for their lengthened chain; they may be rated from one hundred to five hundred, or six hundred roubles. As this income is paid regularly, without any deduction for taxes, some idea may be formed of the riches of this affluent nobleman. Some years ago his son lost a large sum at play to some of his brother officers in the service—

which is no very unusual circumstance in this country, though not often to so large an amount, as this was said to be near three millions of roubles. The Prince, without loss of time, on learning the intelligence, came post to Petersburg, with a view of complaining to the Emperor, that his son had been pillaged. Alexander, after making proper inquiries, very justly replied, "Pay the money, which you can do with great facility; your son is old enough to take care of himself; and, moreover, no one obliged him to play; he must, therefore, take the consequences."

At every evening-party, in this town, besides the usual rubber of whist, there is a table with dice, appropriated to the game of *passe dix*, at which a very dirty custom prevails. The scores are marked by each player with chalk on the card table, and a little brush is used to alter the sums, as they vary, every minute, which has a very slovenly appearance; at times the brush is too actively employed in effacing a debt before it has been liquidated. Some years back at court, where the same custom likewise existed, the Empress-mother, at the close of the game, found a deficiency in the sum which she was entitled to receive; and very

naturally asked who was to make good her winnings. Mr. de —, who was the real defaulter, and probably thought that his imperial creditor could not want the money, very calmly replied, “Madame ce sera sans doute Messrs. Brosse et Co. qui soldent tout.” As we are on the subject of play, I may add, that an incident occurred here the other day at the house of Madame —, to which, though it is hushed up, I only allude, to show that it came to my knowledge; and as I have no wish to propagate evil reports, you will excuse my mentioning any names. A general officer, whose name is well known, was detected by one of his own friends in unfair play at *ecarté*, and publicly reproached with it: this circumstance has not prejudiced his reception in the world, as it would have done in other countries.

Yours ever.

LETTER XVIII.

Russian patriotism.—Heroism of Rostopschin.—Its important effects.—Ingratitude towards him of the Emperor and the nation.—Alexander's conduct on the invasion of Napoleon.—Burning of Moscow.—Disastrous retreat of the French.—Subsequent success of the Russian arms.—Its effect on the policy of the nation.

Petersburg, 14th February, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

It was asserted the other night, in a party of foreigners, (as you may suppose,) that the annals of Russia had produced no remarkable instance of personal sacrifice for the benefit of country or friends; it was allowed that they would fight bravely in the national cause; but examples were wanting of individual heroism, not in valour, but in those acts of self-devotion and self-denial, which are prompted by an ardent wish for the public weal, at the expense of all private

and personal consideration. I do not pretend to much intimate knowledge of Russian history, but I was not backward in citing the noble example of Rostopschin, as an act of heroism worthy of the days of ancient Rome. In condemning Moscow to the flames, he destroyed his own splendid palace and property without regret, and if any thing could prove, beyond a doubt, the vast utility of this wholesale sacrifice to the preservation of the empire, it may be found in the virulent invectives, and whining complaints, of Napoleon himself, when he found all his hopes of providing warm and comfortable quarters for his immense army, during the approaching winter, completely annihilated. The main object of Napoleon, in all his campaigns, had constantly been to press forward, at all risks, to the enemy's capital; and once in possession of that point, to offer terms of peace, which, either from the panic he had inspired, or the wish to be freed from such an unwelcome guest, were generally accepted. That the same policy governed the march to Moscow is very apparent. What then would have been the fate of the Russian empire, if the French armies had found in Moscow a

convenient shelter from the rigorous winter of 1812, and the means of providing for all their wants in the midst of that rich population? Their communications with Europe would have been re-established in the spring; fresh re-enforcements would have arrived; the allies, both Prussian and Austrian, would have remained in their previous subjection to the views of Napoleon; and instead of that fatal retreat, which exterminated the greatest and most powerful army that has ever been assembled in modern times,—instead of that murderous campaign in 1813; which sealed his downfall, and the extinction of his dynasty,—it is more than probable that such altered circumstances would have obtained at least an honourable peace, and have secured to him a triumphant march back to his capital. It is, therefore, not without reason, in my humble opinion, that the late fortunate change in the destinies of Europe, as well as the imposing attitude which Russia assumed on that memorable occasion, may in the main be attributed to the energetic conduct of Rostopschin. How, then, was this saviour of his country rewarded, and how was this act of Spartan constancy eulogized, when the dan-

ger was passed, and the invader expelled? It excited the jealousy of Alexander, and the discontent of the nation.

I have heard it here, or never could have credited, that the disinterested Rostopschin was afterwards so harassed at home for this patriotic deed, by the petty interested spirits who grudged the price after they had reaped the benefit, that he was at last induced to publish a pamphlet, disclaiming all idea of having instigated the conflagration. While every officer in the army was loaded with honours, I knew Rostopschin personally in Paris, living in retirement, and excluded from all rewards. He was a very sensible, well informed man; his conversation was agreeable, and tinged with a vein of humour, which enlivened his narratives; his features were plain, and the French in joke used to say, that he had *le véritable air d'un bruleur de Moscou*; but they seemed, generally, inclined to render him that justice which was so harshly denied by his own countrymen.

The outlines of that invasion have been sufficiently made public, but I hear, occasionally, anecdotes on the subject, which are not so generally known. Up to the last moment, the Russians themselves were im-

pressed with the idea, that Napoleon would not hazard an invasion; but the vast preparations on the frontiers, and the menacing aspect of the negotiations, intimated to Alexander the necessity of preparing his means of defence, and organizing his military forces. He took early measures to terminate the war with Turkey; and having made every disposition of his armies that circumstances would permit, he awaited in silence the awful moment, when his ambitious foe should throw down the gauntlet and commence hostile operations.

The Emperor was present at a ball given by General Beningsen, at his château of Zacrete, in the neighbourhood of Wilna, when the intelligence was brought to him that Napoleon had crossed the Niemen. He instantly quitted the fête, and returned to his cabinet, where he passed the night in writing. His first composition was a bold energetic appeal to the army; he then despatched various letters to the generals and governors of provinces. That which he addressed to Count Soltikoff, the Governor of St. Petersburg, merits remark from the simplicity of its style, and the natural tone in which the justice of his cause was publicly detailed:—

“COUNT NICHOLAS IVANOVITCH,

“French troops have passed the frontier of our empire. A strict observance of treaties on our part, has been repaid by a most perfidious act of aggression. To preserve peace, I have exhausted every means consistent with the dignity of my crown, and the interests of my people. All my efforts have been without success. No object can satisfy the Emperor Napoleon, but the ruin of Russia. The most moderate proposals have been left without reply. An unexpected invasion has openly proved the fallacy of any dependence on protestations of peace and amity, which were even renewed to the latest moment. No resource then is left but the chance of war, and the strenuous employment of those means which, under Providence, we possess to repel force by force.

“I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people, and in the bravery of my troops. Menaced in their very hearths, they will defend them with that firmness and intrepidity, which form the basis of the Russian character. Providence will look down and protect our holy cause. We must gird the sword to defend our country, to preserve our independence, and vindicate our nation-

al honour. Of this be assured, that I will not sheathe that sword, so long as a single armed enemy shall remain alive on the soil of our empire.

(Signed) "ALEXANDER."

After the successes of the French arms had created considerable alarm in the Russian camp, Alexander quitted his army at Polotsk, and repaired to Moscow, for the purpose of demanding fresh succours from the senate. He was met by the immense population of that city at the Smolensko gate. He went strait to the senate-house, where Rostopschin proposed to raise military intrenchments without the town, and arm the inhabitants *en masse* to resist the enemy. His proposal was not only adopted, but it is also worthy of remark, that the Emperor gave him *carte blanche* to execute any measures which he might deem advisable for the public safety. So much for those who say that he acted afterwards without authority.

It was at this period that the public mind became indignant at the Fabian policy, and the wary tactics of Barclay de Tolly, who in the commencement of the campaign was intent on observing the enemy, and allowing

him to advance. Hence arose murmurs, which gradually became more loud and intrusive. At last the cry was raised in favour of Kutusoff, who had obtained popularity by some successes against the Turks; and, notwithstanding that Alexander was sorely opposed to such a nomination, he was ultimately forced to yield to the demands, and even menaces of the prevailing party. The consequence of this was the dismissal of Barclay de Tolly, and the appointment of Kutusoff to the command as general in chief.

Two accusations are made against Rostopshin; that he always had premeditated the burning of Moscow, in the event of the arrival of the French; and that he took all possible means to save his own property from the general wreck. To this it may be said, that such foresight was useful and laudable, as he never dreamt of putting it in execution till General Kutusoff informed him, after the battle of the Moskwa, that the demoralized state of his army rendered it impossible to defend that capital: and, as to the other point, is there any other general in the service who would not have done the same thing? He could not remove his palace, and I have

often heard him say, that his loss in personal property on that occasion was immense.

As soon as the fatal decision was passed, orders were given to all the inhabitants to evacuate the town, and the governor showed no anxiety to desert his post, for he remained till the 14th of September, on which day the French advanced-guard entered by the barrier of Smolensko. The Russian army was then defiling through the streets, and so near were the hostile corps to each other, that the Cossacks of the rear-guard were immediately followed by the van of the enemy. Then, indeed, the mougiks and the criminals who had been liberated for that purpose, began their work of destruction. Hid in the vaults and cellars, they sallied forth at night to strew their matches and fusees in every direction, where houses built of wood were liable to combustion. As soon as the flames were extinguished in one point, they broke out in another, and no sooner had a French general established himself and his suite in a splendid palace, than it speedily became *too hot to hold him*.

Napoleon himself had taken up his quarters in the Kremlin, which was singled out as the principal object of the destroyers. It

was surrounded by a circle of flames; and, very much against his will, he was forced to remove with his staff to the imperial palace of Iverskaia, situated near half a league from the Petersburg barrier. Thus disappointed in their hopes of agreeable quarters after their fatiguing warfare, no words can describe the abusive epithets and virulent accusations which the French lavished on the victims of their aggression, who could not reconcile it to themselves to prepare a hospitable reception for an enemy still reeking with their blood.

It was blazoned to the world, that a nation which could burn its own capital, in order to starve a ruthless invader, must be a horde of barbarians; while these same invaders, when compelled to quit this scene of havoc, scrupled not to finish the work of destruction themselves by blowing up the Kremlin, which they justify by the laws of civilized warfare. It would be difficult to find a more barefaced contradiction.

It is rather amusing to hear the vague attempts made by Napoleon when he was in difficulty, to use his former arts of seducing the lower orders from their allegiance, by the hackneyed promises of liberty and equality;

terms which he had exploded himself as soon as he had attained his own objects in France. But the Muscovites and Tartars were not to be duped by doctrines which, happily for them, were incomprehensible to their unsophisticated nature. When the invader found that there were no hopes of success in that quarter, he struck out another expedient, which proved equally futile, but proclaimed the treacherous intentions of the man who professed to make war upon honourable principles. It is asserted that he wished to raise up a pretender to the Russian throne; and recollecting the rebellion of Pugatscheff, who attempted to pass himself off for Peter III., he ransacked the archives, and took every possible step to find some of the last proclamations of that impostor, which might furnish a clew to those families whose claims to the crown might be asserted. Foiled in these manœuvres, and pressed on all sides by famine and disease, which had reduced his army to little more than one hundred thousand men of all arms, Napoleon turned his thoughts towards the old expedient, a proposal of peace. The tide of affairs, however, was changed: instead of dictating terms, as formerly, he was now obliged to sue, not in-

deed as a suppliant, but earnestly and anxiously, under the specious plea of humane motives, to terminate a war so destructive to all the best interests of human nature.

He who was the cause of all this mischief and ruin was the first to deplore it, when he found that it only recoiled upon himself. M. de Lauriston was twice sent to the headquarters of Kutusoff with pacific proposals, which met with no success; and letters, addressed by Napoleon to Alexander, with the same object, were left without reply.

The Russians were now fully aware of the inextricable dilemma in which their enemies had so rashly entangled themselves; they saw the rapid approach of winter, and all the misery which must attend their retreat, if that measure was decided upon; and they calmly awaited the moment when hostilities might be renewed with fresh vigour and increased advantage. That moment soon arrived; the order for retreat was received with much dissatisfaction by the French army; and to appease their murmurs a general pillage was permitted, and large sums of copper money, found buried in the vaults of the palace, were distributed. This money consisted of large pieces of five copeks, so heavy

that the value of only thirty-five roubles weighed one hundred pounds. The impossibility of carrying away this ponderous coin by the soldiers who were already laden with booty, rendered them anxious to exchange it for gold and silver; and as the common people are very partial to it for common circulation, as soon as the market was established, crowds of every description flocked to the spot, anxious to conclude the purchase. This mass was composed of those who had lingered in the town for the sake of plunder, and peasants from the environs, who were attracted by that love of gain which characterizes the Russian of all classes. The change was speedily established of copper against gold and silver at the rate of eighty to even ninety per cent. profit in favour of the buyer, so anxious were the soldiers to realize their booty; and this attraction produced such violent struggles, and obstinate efforts to approach the scene of action, that the confusion became alarming, and many women and children, who had rashly mixed with the ravenous populace, were either squeezed or trod to death by their more vigorous neighbours.

Napoleon was ready to depart: at the moment of putting his foot in the stirrup, a Po-

lish general, well versed in the traditionary history of Russia, suggested to him, that the great cross of Ivan Velleiki was supposed to have great influence over the destinies of the empire. Eager to seize any opportunity of striking the imagination of a superstitious people, Napoleon instantly ordered it to be pulled down, and carried away with the baggage of the army. He left Moscow on the 20th of October; and, according to his orders, the Kremlin was blown up by the rear-guard on the 22d.

Sufficient details have been given of this disastrous retreat, which plunged so many French families in mourning, and cost so much blood and treasure to the country. The ambitious leader left his devoted troops in their extreme distress: the compunction which he showed for all the misery he had entailed upon them may be appreciated by the manner in which the Abbé de Pradt relates his interview with Napoleon, on the arrival of the letter at Warsaw, on his way to Paris.

He says, "that he was called out of his bed early in the morning by an orderly officer, who left strict injunctions that he should repair immediately to the chief hotel in the

town on pressing business. On entering the court-yard, no particular object struck him, but a Russian sledge, covered with dust, evidently arrived from a long journey. He was ushered into a drawing-room, where he saw Caulaincourt, seated at a table writing; and, farther on, a man in a fur pelisse, calmly looking out of window, with his back turned to him. His first impulse was to express his surprise at seeing the general, who, without noticing his salute, pointed to the individual at the window; the stranger turned round, and he found himself in the presence of the emperor. Struck with astonishment, he began to mutter some expressions of regret at the disasters which public report had already widely disseminated, when Napoleon stopped him in his harangue by a loud laugh, and exclaimed, "*Du sublime au ridicule il ny'a qu'un pas:*" an expression which has since been much cited.

The success which attended the Russian arms in their subsequent campaign in Europe, their occupation of Paris jointly with the allies, and the influence which was yielded generally to Alexander at the congress of Vienna, have naturally enough produced in this nation at home, a rather over-

weening sense of their own weight and importance in European politics. The same opportunity of demonstrating that power, we may trust, will never present itself again in the shape of an irruption of Cossacks from the North into the heart of civilized Europe; but if the spirit of aggrandizement is to rule hereafter in the councils of Russia, it will be towards the East that her future encroachments will extend. This feeling of self-importance introduces with it a great increase of nationality and coldness towards foreigners; the Russian language is spoken much more generally in society than in former days, and the Russian theatre, though productive of little talent or amusement, is in the same spirit frequented of late by the higher classes, and encouraged by the Emperor. Many are the allusions that I hear to our financial difficulties in England, and the enormous national debt, which must cripple our energies and restrict our influence abroad; some even hint that the pacific policy of our government in the late Turkish question was more a matter of necessity than of choice, and that Russia was determined to act on all occasions independently of foreign interference.

When I listen to these lofty expressions, and see at this moment the reduced state of their armies, their immense territorial possessions, and the scanty population which is scattered over these desolate regions, I cannot believe that the Russians are by any means so formidable as they would wish the world to imagine.

Yours ever.

LETTER XIX.

The Emperor Nicholas in London when a young man.—The Waltz and the Quadrille.—Personal appearance and manners of his Imperial Majesty.—The Empress.—Grand Ball at the Winter Palace.—Count Nesselrode and Capo d'Istrias—Their rise to power.—Revolution in Naples.—The Greek question.—Mutinous symptoms of the Guards in Petersburg.—Insurrection in Piedmont.—Policy of Austria.—Resignation of Capo d'Istrias.—General Bubna.—Lord K——.—Anecdotes.

Petersburg, 22nd February, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

You may remember the present Emperor Nicholas fourteen years ago in London, when he lived in the large house at the end of Stratford Place, now occupied by Sir John Beckett. He was then one of the Grand Dukes of Russia, travelling for his amusement, a fine-looking youth, making a conspi-

cuous figure at Almack's, in the waltz, and whirling our English beauties round the circle to a quicker movement than they had previously learned to practise. The waltz and the quadrille were then in their infancy in England, and had just supplanted what the proselytes to the new school opprobriously termed the kitchen dance of our ancestors. The French Boulangere had just kicked poor Sir Roger de Coverley out of doors; Devonshire House was the focus of this Thespian revolution, and in one fell season transformed the steps of a whole nation. The mazy waltz may, perhaps, have turned more heads, but I question if the hearts of its fair votaries have since beat with more honest joy or lively pleasure, than those of their mothers, under the old legitimate system.

To return to Nicholas, he was at that period a tall, handsome stripling, with a fine countenance, and an eye sparkling with intelligence, which has since amply fulfilled its early promise of future energy and enlightened conduct. He is now arrived at the meridian of life; his features are full of animation, but tinged at times with the *pale cast of thought*, which must be inseparable from his position, and which is necessary to the main-

tenance of his dignity. His figure is noble and commanding, just arrived at that degree of stoutness which indicates manly force, but which an apparent tendency to increase will, probably, hereafter extend beyond its present symmetry. His manners are mild and conciliating, and his general demeanour dignified, without superciliousness or *hauteur*. There is an air of amenity in his usual address which surprises a stranger, when he observes in those around him the unceasing awe which his presence so universally inspires. The Empress is fair and affable; she is naturally timid, but her good qualities are the theme of general praise. Their union is perfect, and may be held up as a model to all ranks of their subjects; though surrounded by Eastern magnificence, their tastes are as simple, and their mode of life as pure and domestic, as that of the most exemplary private family in England. Can I carry my eulogium farther?

While occasional visitors, as well as the regular inmates of the palace, who are extremely numerous, are served with liberality and even profusion, the table of the Emperor and Empress, when they dine alone, (as is often the case,) is limited to the cost of fifty

roubles; and as every arrangement belonging to the imperial kitchen is supplied by contract, under the superintendence of the *grand maître du palais*, there is a fixed rate for all expenses, which is never exceeded. Whenever a ball is given at court, the supper is calculated at one thousand roubles for every fifty guests, and so in proportion. At the grand ball given the other night by the Emperor, at the Winter Palace, a supper was served for eleven hundred persons; but some idea may be formed of the additional expenses, when not less than three thousand wax-lights were burning in the marble hall alone, which was the scene of this splendid banquet. The Turkish envoys were invited: Halib Pacha danced a Polonaise, which was considered a great departure from Turkish prejudices, though quite in unison with the Sultan's avowed partiality for European innovations. The dress of these Turks is likewise conformed to the same bias; the turban is exploded in favour of a Greek embroidered cap, and the uniform which they wear is worked in silver like a Hussar's jacket: nothing, in fact, can be more incongruous. They have lost all the dignified originality of their national costume, and have adopted a semi-bar-

barous mixture of **E**uropean and Asiatic habit, without any peculiar character, which has neither the modern taste of the one, nor the ancient dignity of the other. The Salle Blanche was illuminated for the dance with equal splendour.

Having touched upon the Emperor, I may next advert to his prime minister, Count Nesselrode, a name which has acquired much celebrity in Europe. He is chancellor, as well as chief secretary of state for the foreign department; he is a favourite of his sovereign, but as to power and influence, beyond his chancery, he has none; all centres in the great presiding head, which rules this vast empire without control. Count Nesselrode is a German by birth, of no family, and the road which has led to his high preferment in Russia is worthy of remark. The partiality of the late Emperor for foreigners is notorious: they were early in life enlisted into his service, and trained up in the public offices with a certainty of promotion, if their talents deserved it. During the frequent illness of the chancellor Romanzoff, which often incapacitated him from obeying the summons of his master, two young men, who had be-

come his private secretaries, were in the habit of attending his Majesty with the chancellor's portfolio from the foreign office, and of receiving his orders as to the contents. These two young men were Nesselrode and Capo d'Istrias.

Repeated communications of this nature introduced them both to the peculiar notice of Alexander, who was not backward in observing their quickness of perception and talents for business. When the French invasion, in 1812, had been repelled, and the subsequent campaigns in Europe had been arranged between the members of the new coalition, it became evident to the Emperor, that the health of his minister for foreign affairs would be quite unequal to the fatigue of such a formidable journey. The selection of these two young foreigners then naturally suggested itself to supply the place of Romanzoff, and they were accordingly nominated to follow the armies in the suite of Alexander, as joint secretaries of the cabinet. They were present at all the negotiations during the war, and the subsequent conferences at Vienna, where they both distinguished themselves by so much address and

talent in that department, that they rose highly in the favour and estimation of their sovereign.

When Alexander returned to Petersburg, he gave them a convincing proof of his confidence, by permitting them to hold jointly the portfolio for foreign affairs. Never were two young men united in the same office, and equally protected by the same sovereign, whose characters differed so widely from each other. The caution and reserve of Nesselrode was strongly contrasted by the frankness and enthusiasm of Capo d'Istrias. The one was the firm supporter of absolutism, and the old legitimate system; the other was the warm advocate of liberty, and the new theories of the day.

Alexander himself clung to both alternately, as the wavering principles of his political character fluctuated at times from one side to the other. Early education and old recollections pleaded in favour of Nesselrode, while his later bias towards liberal feelings attached him to Capo d'Istrias, who sedulously encouraged them. So far indeed had the sophistry of the latter prevailed at one time over the generous spirit of his master, that he engaged the despotic Sovereign of Russia

to aid and abet the revolutionary projects of his countryman, Ypsilante, in throwing off the Turkish yoke, and proclaiming the independence of Greece.

There is no doubt that Alexander at that time had become deeply tinged with the new doctrines, and probably was guided by a noble impulse in this instance; but as the views of Russia have constantly been directed to the attainment of an ascendancy over those oppressed provinces, it may always remain a question how far this suspicious and secret interference was really disinterested on his part. As far as Capo d'Istrias himself was concerned, there can be no doubt that his influence with his Sovereign was solely used to rescue his country from a degrading subjection without any *arrière pensée* of giving them another master. An enthusiastic love of liberty was the leading passion of his heart.

Such was the state of affairs in the cabinet of St. Petersburg in 1821, when the news arrived that a revolution had broken out in the kingdom of Naples; and a summons from the allied powers to a conference at Troppau rendered the departure of Alexander and his two secretaries a matter of immediate necessity.

The measures to be taken on this new kindling of the revolutionary flame were now to be discussed, and the alarm was not diminished at the congress, when Alexander, listening always to the suggestion of his Greek secretary, professed himself opposed to any armed interference with a view to repress the cry for liberty in a foreign state. In vain did Prince Metternich urge, with all his eloquence, the necessity of marching an Austrian army without delay against the Neapolitan rebels; Alexander still remained averse to hostile measures. At length it was determined, at all events, to wait till the King of Naples could escape from his own dominions, and the congress was removed forthwith to Laybach, as a point nearer to the scene of action, in order to await his arrival.

During that interval circumstances occurred which gave a new turn to the pending deliberations, and produced a more decided unanimity in the general views and objects of the assembled sovereigns. Among other questions which could not fail to suggest themselves at such a moment, that of Greece inevitably demanded consideration, both as a new source of revolutionary prin-

ciples, and as materially implicating the relations which then existed between Austria and the Porte. After all the secret encouragement given by Capo d'Istrias to the projects of Ypsilante, the embarrassment of Alexander may well be conceived, when he found that the wily Metternich was prepared to side with the Sultan. Two lines of policy, so widely different, could not be permitted to exist simultaneously in a congress, which had purposely met for the great general object of repressing disorder, and promoting the tranquillity of Europe.

The discussion, as may be supposed, was serious; but the undecided Autocrat, still floating between two opinions, was at last brought round to the maxims of his opponents, and finished by disavowing all participation in the plots which were brewing for Greek emancipation.

These tardy convictions soon assumed a more decided aspect, when certain mutinous symptoms broke out in the regiments of guards at Petersburg, and forcibly proved to the Emperor, that while he was indulging in vague theories of liberty abroad, his own power and even his throne were already placed in jeopardy by the dissemination of

those very principles at home. An appeal to private interest is seldom made in vain; and the apprehension of consequences, which he had never before anticipated, acted so powerfully on the mind of Alexander, that all opposition to the projected military movements in the Italian states was instantly withdrawn.

The King of Naples arrived at Laybach, and this event was speedily followed by a farther insurrection in Piedmont, which added fresh fuel to the revolutionary flame, and electrified the congress, but more particularly the Austrian cabinet, with alarm and consternation. No time was to be lost in taking up the gauntlet, which sedition had thrown down; and Alexander, who partook of these feelings, perhaps more violently to palliate his previous apathy, became earnest and clamorous in his proposals to summon a Russian army from his Polish frontier, to assist in quelling this formidable and wide-spreading mischief. Much as the intractability of that sovereign, in the first instance, had disconcerted the views of Metternich, this new demonstration of energy and vigour in the common cause, produced not less in that

wary statesman a secret feeling of anxiety and vexation. The jealous policy of Austria was thwarted at once in two points. It dreaded any fresh precedent for the introduction of those numerous bands from the north to arbitrate, sword in hand, in the internal arrangements of the great European family; and conscious of its own ability to triumph alone on the present occasion, it saw with envy and ill-will the attempt of any foreign rival to share the laurels on a soil where its own private interests were so immediately concerned. To prevent this collision, and forestall the advance of the Russian troops, orders were sent to the Austrian corps, under General Fremont, to enter Italy, and march direct upon Naples. With so much despatch were these commands obeyed, that in two days that division, the flower of the Austrian army, arrived at Laybach, where the disgusting scene was exhibited of his Neapolitan Majesty calmly passing in review the battalions of a foreign power, openly commissioned to lay waste his dominions, and butcher his own subjects.

The rest of that crusade is well known: the invaders met with no resistance, and the ill-concerted revolution was scattered to the

winds. The insurrection in Piedmont was of still shorter duration; General Bubna, who commanded at Milan, without waiting for any orders from his own government, collected all the troops from the neighbouring garrisons, fell upon the rebels, and in two days completed their destruction. The reward of this heroic act, which restored tranquillity to a whole province, and what was more dear to Austrian policy, rendered all Russian interference by arms in Italy nugatory and unnecessary, was the disapprobation of his conduct by that sensitive cabinet, because he had taken upon himself to follow the impulse of his own judgment, without the proper instructions from the Aulic Council. He was treated with marked neglect at Vienna, and afterwards died of a broken heart in 1823. The false position in which Alexander had placed himself during this conference, and the unsatisfactory result, which it had produced to himself, effected a considerable change in his feeling of good-will and cordiality towards Capo d'Istrias, to whose liberal notions and counsels much of the late mortification of his master might fairly be attributed. There were not wanting those about the Emperor, whose opinions and in-

terests were diametrically opposed to those of the Greek secretary, and who eagerly availed themselves of his partial disgrace to widen the breach, and foment the displeasure under which he laboured. The Austrian prime minister, who found in M. de Nesselrode a warm admirer of legitimate doctrines, threw all his personal weight and influence into the scale to assist his views of ambition, and establish him in the favour of Alexander, at the expense of his colleague, with whose opinions he himself was openly at variance. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the coolness of that sovereign towards Capo d'Istrias should have undergone no diminution; attempts were made to discover his private correspondence; his steady adherence to liberal principles became an object of suspicion; and though he followed his master back to Petersburg, it was evident that he had lost an influence which could never be regained. On the other hand, his German colleague, in the same proportion rose in the favour and confidence of the Emperor; both continued in office, but the distinction was too marked for the high independent spirit of Capo d'Istrias, and in the

following year he requested leave to resign his post, which was granted.

He travelled into Switzerland, carrying with him marks of the Emperor's munificence, who, far from bearing ill-will to a faithful but perhaps incautious, servant, kept up a correspondence with him by letter, and has since intrusted him with a mission of importance to Greece, where he now resides.

M. de Nesselrode, left without a rival, was secured in his situation as minister for foreign affairs at Petersburg. At the death of Alexander he was retained in the same post by his present Majesty; and from his talents and assiduity, but more particularly from the intimate knowledge which he possesses, through long experience, of the policy and views of all the different cabinets in Europe, he will no doubt enjoy, to the end of his life, the favour and confidence of the Emperor Nicholas.

I have been carried away by my subject to give you this long detail; but as all the circumstances are true, and by no means generally known, I trust you will find they have sufficient interest to plead my excuse.

I should also add, as a farther particular, that the Russian army, summoned at the

above juncture by Alexander to join in quelling the Neapolitan revolution, amounted to forty thousand men, who were already on their march to the Austrian frontier. The chief command was intrusted to General Yermoloff, who came express from the Caucasus, and the staff to Lieut. General Diebitsch, both of whom had already arrived at Laybach for that purpose; when the rapid termination of the campaign by Austria rendered it necessary to countermand the march of the Russians.

The popularity of General Bubna at Milan was universal; it not only extended to the Italians, but personally to those who were actually conspiring against the Austrian yoke; many of whom, to the last moment, frequented his *salons*. He was well informed of what was going on, and prepared to act with energy when the occasion required it; and though he received all with good-humour and cordiality, he kept a sharp eye on their proceedings.

Among the foreigners then residing at Milan was our good friend Lord K——, who, to numerous amiable and valuable qualities, added perhaps a too exaggerated idea of liberal principles; and, from the warm feelings

of his nature, was occasionally tempted to take too lively an interest in the political affairs of other nations. Bubna, who lived with him on terms of intimacy, and was well aware of his bias towards the cause which he himself was bound to put down, felt anxious that he should not be drawn into any position which might at all implicate him with the Austrian Government. He therefore one day took him aside, and spoke to him in the following manner:—"I have the greatest personal regard for you, and respect for your character; but I am aware of certain intimacies which you have formed here with those whom it is my duty to watch; information is daily brought to me—and, whether well founded or not, if your name should be included, I must order your arrest. One word will set my mind at rest—I know the value of an English gentleman's word; give me your promise, as a man of honour, that you will not countenance any steps against the government, and I shall never listen to any remark that may be made about you." The word was instantly given, and all suspicion vanished.

One evening, when visitors as usual were assembled in the *salons* of General Bubna, he

himself was engaged at a game of cards, in the midst of which a packet of despatches was brought in, which seemed to require immediate attention. Giving his hand to one of his aides-de-camp to play for him, he retired to his cabinet, saying, that he would return in a few minutes. Half an hour elapsed, and still the general did not make his appearance; at last, after a full hour, he entered the room with his pipe in his mouth, in full uniform, and a travelling cap on his head. He then addressed Lord K—— with a smile, and said, “Adieu! my carriage is at the door; before to-morrow is past *vous aurez de mes nouvelles*.”

The revolution had broken out; the general in six hours afterwards was engaged on the scene of action with the Piedmontese insurgents; and the news of his success was brought to Milan within the time he had predicted.

Yours ever.

LETTER XX.

Prince Metternich challenged to fight a duel by the Emperor Alexander.—Details connected with this curious circumstance.—Ceremonies at the Carnival.—Entertainment at the House of the English Embassy.—The Mazourka.—The Supper.—An intruder.—Display of beauty.—Presence of the Emperor and Empress.—Mal-à-propos selection of a Comedy.

Petersburg, 24th February, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

I REALLY might begin this letter with a *kyrielle* of epithets, like Madame de Sevigné, when she announced the marriage of M. de Lauzun with the Grande Mademoiselle. I might say, that I have just been told from undoubted authority, “la chose la plus singulière, la plus curieuse, la plus extraordinaire, la plus merveilleuse, la plus incroyable, et cependant la plus vraie.” After having raised your curiosity to this pitch, I will come to the point at once; though I think I

hear you say to yourself, "The traveller is going to use his privilege." We have all heard of the intimate friendship which existed at the time between the Emperor Alexander and Prince Metternich; but, all is not gold that glitters; and those who are in high and elevated stations are not more exempt from private pique and secret heart-burnings than their more humble neighbours. This puissant Emperor Alexander once sent a formal challenge to Prince Metternich to fight a duel with him, like two young students from the Ecole Polytechnique, or two *tapageurs* from the Café Tortoni. I am now going to give you the details. This curious event took place during the meeting of the Congress at Vienna in the year 1814, when the parties interested were occupied in remodelling the affairs of Europe, after the overthrow of Napoleon, and held in their hands, it may be said, the destinies of the world.

It will be necessary first to look a little behind the curtain, and explain the bias of certain private feelings which influenced the minds and views of these self-constituted arbiters in their territorial allotments to themselves, as well as to those powers who sued

at the bar of their modern Areopagus. When the question respecting the fate of Saxony was agitated at the Congress her faithful adherence to treaties, and her persevering constancy to the last in the cause of Napoleon, had incurred the indignation of these awful legislators, and serious projects were, for a moment, entertained of a total dismemberment.

This idea, from various *under* causes, to which it is unnecessary to allude, was finally abandoned—but even this act of clemency may be attributed to no feeling of national commiseration. It originated solely in jarring interests and secret jealousies amongst the judges themselves, which required either a barrier on the one side, or a *point de menace* on the other, according to their own geographical positions.

If then the kingdom of Saxony was permitted to exist, it became not the less necessary that her sovereign should pay the penalty of his sins, and indemnify those who had suffered in the cause which he had so pertinaciously aided and abetted.

Among the foremost in this class was Prussia, who showed great anxiety to obtain, in the proposed partition of that kingdom, a

larger share of territory than it suited the Austrian policy to concede. But still her claims were so undeniable, she had rendered such eminent services to the common cause during the war, and had sustained such signal losses in her various struggles against the power of Napoleon, that it became a very delicate and embarrassing task for Austria to take an open and decided part in opposition to the views of that power.

It was not, however, in the nature of Prince Metternich to abandon a project once firmly conceived; he, therefore, only changed his policy, and sought privately to frustrate the views of Prussia, through the influence and opposition of other powers. His machinations, as usual, were crowned with success; England and France entered into his views, and it next became essential to secure the assent and co-operation of Russia. This point was so much the more difficult, as a similarity of ideas and family connexions had rendered the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia most firmly attached to each other; but an unexpected circumstance, hinging solely upon the romantic character of the former sovereign, induced him, though much against his will, to enter into those po-

litical views which the wily Austrian minister had suggested to the other confederates.

The King of Saxony had been placed in a most humiliating position: he had requested permission to plead his cause formally before the Congress, which had been flatly denied; he was left to await a sentence from which there was no appeal—a sentence of confiscation, to which no limits were fixed but in the breasts of his adversaries.

Alexander, whose goodness of heart was on some occasions carried to excess, was at that time imbued with very exaggerated and chivalrous notions upon matters of policy; he was struck with feelings of commiseration for a sovereign, reduced to the degrading state of an humble petitioner; and giving way at once to the charitable impulse of his nature, he became an unreluctant favourer of the Austrian politics. Metternich found little difficulty in engaging him on the side of the King of Saxony.

The mortification of Prussia at this unexpected derangement of her plans may easily be conceived, but when so many statesmen of various biases and opinions were assembled together in one capital, it was not possible

that a state secret of such importance could long remain undetected. Prince Hardenberg soon unravelled the whole plot, and discovered the real author of all those manœuvres, which had led to the discomfiture of his claims and pretensions. From that hour he determined on taking a signal vengeance of his artful adversary. The story is worthy of remark, if it were only as a type of diplomatic morality, of that laxity of principle, which men of high unblemished character in private life still think allowable in their public transactions.

Hardenberg and Metternich had long been bound by ties of mutual friendship and confidence: they had both been actuated by the same feelings in all the great political questions which had been hitherto discussed between their respective governments. Their official correspondence as ministers had always testified their sincere wish for peace and amity; while their private letters as friends were written in a strain of intimacy, and unreserved familiarity, which is perhaps very unusual with such wary diplomatists.

On referring back to these incautious communications from his friend, Prince Hardenberg accidentally placed his finger on a private letter from Prince Metternich, written

at a time, when the supposed views and professed sentiments of the Russian Emperor were very much at variance with the course of policy supported by the Austrian cabinet. A great feeling of rancour and ill-will was apparent in this epistle; severe comments were made on the political conduct of Alexander, who was himself technically denominated the *barbarous Scythian*, and the whole concluded with some personal allusions to that sovereign, of a very offensive nature, and admirably calculated to wound the vanity which formed an ingredient of his character. Hardenberg had no sooner cast his eye over this letter, than he saw at once the advantage which might be derived from it, in farthering his plans of vengeance on the writer. Perhaps some lurking resentment against Alexander himself, for the readiness with which he had lent himself to the projects of the opposing party, might have found an additional gratification, in rendering him subservient to the scheme, which he immediately decided on adopting.

Prince Hardenberg at this time was charged by the Emperor of Russia to furnish him with certain documents concerning the Prussian boundaries, for his own private in-

spection; and, in compliance therewith, a voluminous mass of papers was forwarded to his apartment from the Prussian Chancery; but, by some *inexplicable inadvertence*, this mischievous letter had accidentally found its way into the packet, and at once attracted the notice of the Emperor.

To describe the rage and fury of Alexander when he read this tissue of invective against himself, from the pen of one whom he had treated with so much friendship and consideration, would be impossible. He saw in it not only an act of public perfidy, but of private insult: the former he might overlook or despise; but the latter appeared to him such a wanton outrage of his feelings as a gentleman, that he instantly determined upon calling him to a personal account. What then must have been the amazement of — when the Emperor sent for him into his presence, and resolutely commissioned him to carry a formal challenge in his name to Prince Metternich. He was at first overcome with stupor; remonstrance with a sovereign was impossible; and the violent excitement under which the commission was given sufficiently proved that the giver was

not in a temper of mind to listen to such interference.

On leaving his Imperial Majesty, — went forthwith to the Archduke Charles, and recited what had passed; he said that no time must be lost in appeasing the sovereign, and arranging the affair, as he felt confident that if the message was not carried, the Emperor was capable of offering some public affront to his adversary at the grand ball which was to be given that night at the palace.

A private meeting was immediately held of the highest and most influential characters at Vienna, to adopt some measures of accommodation, though the Emperor at first would not listen to any representations. He quoted the example of Charles the Fifth, who challenged Francis the First to single combat; and, as the personal allusions seemed to rankle in his mind much more deeply than the other expressions, he was inexhaustible in his complaints of the wound which had been inflicted on his private honour. At length the intercessions and expostulations of so many distinguished personages propitiated his anger, which was only demonstrated that night by turning his back to M. de Metternich, when he, unconscious of all that had

passed, approached to pay his respects to him. Two or three years passed away before the Emperor Alexander would have any private communication with the Prince on any subject; and, though he afterwards appeared to have overlooked the offence, it is probable that it never was either completely forgiven or forgotten.

Great care was taken at the time, by the few who were privy to the transaction, that it should not be made public; but many of those who did know it, and, in their study of human nature, were wont to trace effects to their real causes, have accounted for the subsequent disposition of Alexander to encourage free and liberal principles, by a wish to thwart and mortify a man who had behaved towards him with so much duplicity. My last letter will have shown that, even in 1821, this feeling, on his part, preponderated at Laybach; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the wound, inflicted through Hardenberg's malice, was not even at that period entirely healed.

Alexander's reluctance at first to permit an armed interference at Naples, and the anxious jealousy of Prince Metternich afterwards to prevent the arrival of Russian

troops, are no mean indications that very little sympathy or good will existed between the Russian sovereign and the Austrian minister.

The poet has said,

“What great events from trivial causes spring;”

and the history of mankind abounds with instances to prove the axiom. Human nature is the same in every degree, from the prince to the peasant; it is governed by the same passions, and liable to the same infirmities, but with a vast difference in the results, proportioned to their sphere of action; a bloody war in the Palatinate may be traced to a momentary indigestion of Louvois, and the fate of a whole nation may be changed by a sarcastic remark on the figure of Alexander.

With a view to infuse a little spirit into the entertainment of the Carnival, balls have been given by all the foreign ministers, at which the Emperor, Empress, Grand-duke Michael, &c., have constantly attended, with this distinction, that to the houses of the three ambassadors the imperial family came by invitation, but to the envoys extraordinary, and others, they were supposed to come as unex-

pected evening visitors, such being the etiquette of the Russian court.

In both instances, however, the ceremony was the same; the Empress wore a profusion of jewels, and all the high officers of state were in attendance on their majesties.

That which was given by Lord and Lady H——, at the English Embassy, took place the night before last, (22d,) and it would be difficult to see a more magnificent fête in any other country. The house is spacious, and was brilliantly illuminated; the Empress, who is very fond of dancing, and is herself a very graceful figure, was the most conspicuous object in the ball-room; she danced like any private individual, without ceremony, and remarkably well, during the whole night; entering into all the spirit of the Mazourka, which is here a national dance, and performed in the greatest perfection. The air of the Mazourka is varied and pleasing; the step, if gracefully executed, might be difficult to a foreigner; but I have no doubt Lord V——s, who has become a proficient, will introduce it next year with great success at Almacks'. One of the varieties in this dance is rather amusing: a lady selects two companions of her own sex, and consults

with them on the denomination which they may choose to adopt; it is generally animal, or vegetable, *chat* and *chien*, or *chou* and *carotte*—none ever select *pomme de terre*;—she leads them towards a gentleman, and asks him to name the object of his preference; he then dances with the lady whose sobriquet he has preferred.

In this manner, I saw the Imperial consort of the Autocrat of all the Russias fall to the lot of Prince Albert of Prussia, under the unassuming denomination of *carotte*. The supper was served for about two hundred and fifty persons, with great regularity and abundance. The very essence of the court was present, and the ladies were dressed with as much taste and elegance as could be seen at a ball at the Elysée Bourbon; but here again the demon Ennui, in the disguise of a courtier, covered with stars and ribands, had eluded the vigilance of Lord H——'s porter, and I am sure without any card of invitation from his Lordship, who did every thing that a hospitable host could do to drive him out of the assembly, skulked about the different rooms, cringing and bowing, but evidently determined to maintain his post, in spite of every effort that was made to con-

sign him to the door. There was a great display of beauty among the women; those who were most particularly admired were the Princesses Ourousoff and Yousoupoff, Mesdames Zavadoffsky, Pashkoff, Zuboff, Witgenstein, and Narishkin; Mesdemoiselles Yatsoff and Rosette, maids of honour to the Empress; one look from whom, like the touch of the spear of Ithuriel, had such a powerful effect on the monster, that I observed he was very cautious in approaching them. It was altogether a brilliant scene, and, to use the sky-rocket expression of the Morning Post, went off with considerable *éclat*.

The Emperor was dressed in the plain uniform of his guards, with high boots and spurs. He constantly walked through the different rooms, conversing in the most affable manner with the company, but it was impossible not to observe the awe which his presence seemed to create in his own subjects. Notwithstanding his late illness, he still seems to be growing fat, which even his fine tall figure could not conceal.

The Empress is very apprehensive of cold, in consequence of which the rooms were kept so hot that it became oppressive, particularly to the dancers. She was beautifully dressed

in a rose-coloured gown, and wore a magnificent necklace of diamonds and precious stones, which seemed attached to her robe at the bosom, and descended in a *rivière* to her feet.

To-day the Emperor gives a grand dinner to all the superior officers who have been employed in the late campaign; it is a Waterloo dinner in Russia, to commemorate the passage of the Balkan, and the taking of Adrianople.

The *bévue* which, I am told, created at first some coolness in Russian society towards the Duc de Mortemart, the French ambassador, was of so ludicrous a nature, that it is worth relating. A mistake of his secretary, in sending out cards of invitation without prefixing the proper titles of the guests, gave in the first instance some offence, which was afterwards to be repaired by another entertainment more carefully announced in proper form. The object proposed was a little French comedy, to be acted by the members of the ambassador's family, on a theatre fitted up for the occasion in his hotel. The Russians are very partial to the French stage, and a *Spectacle de Société* is always more interesting than a public re-

presentation; the company, therefore, assembled with great good-will, and harmony, to all appearance, was completely re-established. By one of those unfortunate coincidences which are impossible to be foreseen, and which sometimes will furnish an unpleasant construction to the most innocent intentions, the comedy of "L'Ours et le Pacha" was selected by the actors for this occasion. It is a favourite little piece in France, and must be in any country, where bears are not indigenous, and where the climate does not oblige the lords and ladies of the land to borrow their costume, whenever they venture out of their houses. Perhaps, the actual war, which was then going on with Turkey, might have rendered the allusion to the Pacha still more striking also. Be that as it may, the scene opened, and the principal *dramatis personæ* proved to be two enormous bears: this was, indeed, past bearing; the offence was not to be forgiven, and even to this day the ambassador, with all his known *amabilité* and high-bred manners, has never been able to efface the impression of this unintentional affront.

I remain always.

LETTER XXI.

Heterogeneous mass of Legislation.—Contradictory Statutes.—
Curious Trial.—A ramble in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg.—Humble equipage of the Emperor.—His Character.—
Russian Dinners.—Fish abounding in the Wolga.

Petersburg, 28th February, 1830.

MY DEAR ———,

WHEN I stated to you, in a former letter, that the code of laws in Russia consisted of a series of Ukases, issued at the will of the sovereign, on the most trifling occasions, and frequently of the most contradictory nature, I did not mention that their number had become almost incalculable.

A ludicrous instance of this nature, as well as the not less ludicrous manner in which the Ukase has been interpreted by the Judges, in

pronouncing their sentence has lately been extracted from the judicial proceedings in that country. It is thus stated.

The town of Kamieniets, a fortified place, formerly the barrier of Poland against Turkish invasion, but now the residence of the government of Podolia, has lately been the scene of considerable agitation in consequence of a singular circumstance. A young Russian officer, of handsome person and noble birth, was seen one morning suddenly to fall or leap from the first story of a house into the street. He had the good fortune not to sustain any injury himself, but a poor Wallachian labourer, who was passing at the time, was nearly crushed under the weight of his fall. This event became the subject of general conversation, but there was a mystery attached to it which none were able to explain. The house from which the officer fell, in such a very unaccountable manner, was situated in the Karwassarg suburb, and belonged to a rich Armenian merchant, named Christophor, who, a few months before, had married a young Georgian girl of remarkable beauty. Every one was lost in conjectures, when, in a few days afterwards, it became publicly known that Chris-

tophor had applied to the bishop for a license of separation from his wife, and the public curiosity seemed to anticipate a full explanation, when it was farther announced that the Wallachian Grodisco had cited the Russian officer, Count Balaban, before the tribunals, to obtain damages for the injury he had sustained; and, moreover, that on his side the Count Balaban had cited Christophor, who, in his turn, had cited his own wife, also, to appear before the magistrates of the place. This complicated suit was to be tried before the civil court of Kamienicts; the principals and witnesses were summoned to appear before the judges, and the hall of audience was crowded with spectators of all ranks and conditions. The first who appeared on the bench of the accused was a young woman, of exquisite beauty, dressed with great magnificence; this was the wife of the Armenian Christophor. By her side was seated her husband, a stout muscular man, whose scanty gray locks showed symptoms of advancing age, while his piercing look, alternately fixed on the public and his judges, seemed sedulously to avoid the view of a young officer, who stood near him, carelessly coaxing his black mustachios, and intent on exhibiting, to the

greatest advantage, a handsome figure, and elegant uniform which was decorated with various orders. This officer was the Count Balaban. A few paces off from this group appeared a little dirty old man, whose countenance, pale as death, was barely to be distinguished through the squalid tresses of a long beard, which flowed down to his waist. This man, dressed in the ordinary sheepskin, was the Wallachian Grodisko, scarcely recovered from the bruises which he had received from his late accident. A profound silence reigned in the hall, when the chief judge, seated between his two assistant magistrates, formally announced, by ring 'of bell, that the court was opened in the name of His Imperial Majesty; and the secretary, by his order, read out the depositions, which had been made by the contending parties. In these cases, alone, the Imperial Ukases permit publicity and proceedings in open court.

Before us, Ivan Ivanovitch Vicrovkine, Captain Ispravnik, of the district of Kamienicts, and Matwiej Havrylovitch Sobakine, police master of the town of Kamienicts, have declared upon oath, as follows, the undermentioned.

S. Zahar Grodisko, aged sixty-eight years, Wallachian, born at Kichonief, residing at Kamieniets, inscribed in the registers of that town as basket-maker by profession.

“ On the 5th January I was going to the banks of the Smotrytch, in order to get some branches of willow, which I wanted to complete a kitchen-basket, for the use of the Carmelite fathers. I passed through the suburb of Karwassarg, with the tears in my eyes, not from grief, but from the excessive cold; at every step I was obliged to feel if my nose was frozen; the snow crackled under my feet, when suddenly some heavy substance fell upon my head, and I was thrown to the ground. In the first moment of my alarm I gave a loud shriek, for I thought it was one of the fallen angels whom God was despatching to the infernal regions, who had tumbled on my head. At this moment I perceived a man, whose shirt and pantaloons, his only covering, were torn, and who took to flight with the utmost rapidity. He was soon arrested by the passers-by, but shortly afterwards released. Some one then came up to me, raised me from the ground and said, “Be of good cheer, the Count will recompense you.” I was carried to my hut, where

I lay at the point of death, without any assistance; as a little girl, my only remaining child, did nothing but cry and sob. I heard no more of the Count than of the man in the moon. Mr. Shovrognski, the lawyer, that excellent man, procured me a physician, paid me every attention, and has taken charge of my complaint."

The Count Platon Alexievitch Balaban, captain in the regiment of hussars of Isioum, aged twenty-five years, born at Moscow.

"I lodged in the house of Christophor, the merchant; wishing to employ my leisure time, I proposed to give lessons in French and music to my hosts. The husband is a man absorbed in his business; he refused my offer, but consented that I should give some instructions in French to his wife. One morning early, I was occupied as usual in teaching the lady, when the man rudely burst into the room, and, either excited by wine, or seized with some incomprehensible fit of rage, he picked a quarrel with me, beat his wife, stripped my coat off my back, and then threw me out of window, as if I had been a dog, or a cat, or a piece of lumber. I had the misfortune to fall upon a man, whom I had never seen before, and have never seen since. This is all I know of the matter."

Nicholas Christophor, aged fifty-eight years, born at Erivan, in Asia, residing for the last ten years at Kamienicts, licensed merchant of the first guild, trading in the commerce of Cachemires and jewellery with the East.

“It is four years ago that I bought a Georgian slave, aged thirteen years; I gave her an excellent education, treated her like a father, and, to complete my generosity, married her last year, in despite of the proverb, which says, that if a man has no sense at twenty, is not married at thirty, and has not made his fortune at forty, he is a fool for the rest of his life. Every thing, however, went on prosperously in my home; I placed entire confidence in my wife’s conduct, and although the saying is, that if you find the head of a dead horse, or of a dead woman, be sure to put on the bridle, as both are animals likely to be restive even after death, I neglected the popular admonition, and I did wrong. When the regiment of Izioum arrived in our town, I received as a lodger the Captain Count Balaban: I allow that he conducted himself with great civility, which is seldom the case with officers; but he persisted in ogling my wife, and every look which

he gave her was a poniard in my heart. She also seemed to encourage privately his addresses. Unfortunately, I could not always remain at home, as my business required occasional absences. In such cases I forbade my wife to receive him, as no one will believe that I could be simple enough to permit, as he asserts, that he should give lessons to my wife. She is a good musician already, and speaks French fluently, owing to the liberal education which I gave her. I had thus refused the obliging offers of the Count, and enjoined my wife to avoid him, but since our Mother Eve, prohibition is only an incitement to do wrong: They saw each other constantly; the public laughed at me, the servants gave dark hints of what was going on. At last I determined to convince myself of the truth with my own eyes. I feigned a journey for some days, and set off in the evening; but early in the morning I returned, and forced my way to my wife's room, where I found the Count. She became speechless from fear; I was overcome with a sudden fit of passion, and seizing the officer with both arms, I threw him out of the window. As for my wife, she confessed her guilt, and I have not hurt a hair of her head.

I went to the bishop and explained the whole affair. His reply was, 'A divorce is impossible, but repentance may wipe away the crime: send me your wife.' I solemnly protested that nothing could induce me to live with her again, but I cannot turn her out of doors, as she has neither friends nor relations in the world."

Marianne Zulma, wife of Christophor, aged seventeen, born in Georgia. "I know nothing of this business; I was asleep when my husband entered into my room, and was awakened by the noise of his throwing the Count out of window; my husband sent me to the bishop, who ordered me to say my prayers, to confess myself, and to fast. I am called guilty and criminal; but I know not why, as I am innocent."

A servant maid of Madame Christophor.

"I am the only guilty person, but guilty solely of imprudence. I knew that the Count was in love with my mistress, but I had always refused to assist his views, or facilitate an interview, being well convinced of her virtue, and certain that I should only incur her anger. One evening the Count came to inform me, that his regiment was about to depart, and he must follow it; that he

should die of despair, if he could not contrive to obtain her picture. 'How can that be done?' said I; 'my mistress will never consent to give it you.' 'Oh!' replied he, 'I know of a way to procure it without her knowledge. I am a good proficient in drawing: show me into her room, and, while she sleeps, I will take a hasty sketch of her lovely features.' I refused for a long time, but his entreaties were so earnest, that, fearing to drive him to despair, and seeing no real impropriety in his request, I at last consented. One night I softly opened the door of her room while my mistress was fast asleep; but, before he could begin his sketch by the faint light of a lamp, my master entered in a violent rage, and seized the Count."

Here Christophor observed, that the maid was evidently bribed by his wife and her accomplice.

An old servant of Christophor.

"It is as true as the day is light, and the night is dark, that the Count entered the house as soon as my master quitted it."

Other witnesses left no doubt of the guilt of the parties.

After these depositions had been read, the counsels for the defence, Shovrognsky,

Grondzignsky, and Plognsky, each, in their turn, spoke in favour of Grodisko, Christophor, and Count Balaban.

When the pleadings were terminated, the judge rang his bell three times, and the soldiers cleared the court, that the deliberations might commence. The solution of the affair was very difficult, and the professional men themselves were embarrassed as to the verdict. It appeared clear that the poor labourer Grodisko had been nearly crushed by the Count, and was entitled to damages. But from whom? It appeared hard to make the officer responsible for the consequences of an aerial flight, which he had undertaken much against his inclination. It was the husband who had thrown the officer out of window, and, under the actual circumstances, he seemed to be justified in what he had done; nevertheless, as he founded his excuse on the infidelity of his wife, it must come under the head of the marriage act, and could only be judged in the Ecclesiastical courts. On the other hand, the civil tribunal was loath to consider the action of the husband in a criminal point of view. At last the doors were opened, and the secretary put an end to all

doubts and conjectures by reading the following sentence:

“ We, Charles Durowski, Judge of the district of Kamieniets; Etienne Starjygnski, sub-magistrate; Barthelemi, Michalski, sub-magistrate; and Antoine Hwzyjunowski, notary of the said district, have unanimously decreed as follows:—

“Inasmuch as marriage is a religious sacrament consecrated by the church, every difference arising between man and wife must be referred to the Ecclesiastical Court:

“ Inasmuch as the Ukase of H. I. M. Paul the First, in the year of our Lord 1799, enacts that every man has a right to throw out of the window of his house into the street, any useless piece of furniture which he shall find in the said house, provided always that he take care to cry out three times to the passers below, ‘Take heed, take heed, take heed!’ in default of which, he is to be mulcted in a fine of twenty-five roubles, and be held answerable for all the mischief he may occasion by such neglect:

“ Inasmuch as the Count Platon Alexiewitch Balaban was doubtless, in the opinion of Nicholas Christophor, a very useless piece

of furniture in his house, which he was authorized by the law to throw out of window, but always on the condition of crying out three times, 'Take heed.'

"Inasmuch as Nicholas Christophor neither cried out thrice, nor twice, nor even once, and has, therefore, acted contrary to the express injunction of the ukase, we condemn Nicholas Christophor to pay the said fine of twenty-five roubles to the state; and moreover to pay two thousand roubles damages to Zahor Grodisko; as also two thousand roubles for the expenses of his cure, and of his law-suit; and, farther, the whole costs of the proceedings each of which sums to be acquitted within seven days from this time. We entirely acquit the Count Platon Alexiewitch Balaban from the charge, considering him only in the light of a useless piece of furniture in the house of Nicholas Christophor. We also acquit Maria Zulma, wife of the said Christophor, and we leave to Nicholas Christophor full permission to prosecute his suit against his spouse before the Ecclesiastical Court."

When this sentence was, agreeably with the law, submitted to the approbation of the Emperor, His Imperial Majesty laughed

heartily at the mode in which the judge had solved the difficulty.

The Russian empire is composed of so many different nations, which have all their own prescriptive laws and rights, that even so far back as the reign of the Empress Catherine, the collection of Ukases then amounted to seventy thousand; and when we consider the states, which have since been incorporated with it, during the three following reigns, this heterogeneous mass of legislation must be nearly doubled. When, in addition to this circumstance, we consider also the total absence of an experienced legal profession, to explain these contradictory statutes, it is almost a wonder that the judges, who are assisted by no jury, as in most countries, can, with the best intentions, make up their minds to pronounce a sentence which may be strictly legal. This is always in the supposition that no bribe has been administered, as, in that case, precedents may always be found in the law itself to justify, or rather legalize, the most unfair and partial decisions.

Any day when the weather is moderate, that is, when there is no imminent danger of losing your nose, and the cold is only ten degrees more severe than an English winter, I wrap myself up in the eternal bearskin, and

take what is called brisk exercise about the streets of Petersburg. Quitting the Perspective, which on such occasions is tolerably peopled with visitors, I ramble into the adjacent parts, and soon find myself in the solitude of a desert. Here and there a mougik in a sheepskin crosses my path, or a solitary sledge glides by on the beaten snow, conveying an officer to the barracks; just, in fact, sufficient movement to prove that I am not in the city of the dead.

The fine hotels which abound in all directions are generally shut up, as the noble proprietors are the very reverse of the owners of the Castle of Otranto, and are become too *small* to inhabit them. Many of them are on sale, but where are purchasers to be found except in the government, which has already got possession of the estates? Thus you see the different public establishments of the empire now occupy houses, formerly belonging to the nobility, which sometimes perhaps caprice, but more frequently necessity, has induced them to sell. The *Enfans trouvés* are in the Hotel Razoumoufsky; the Lombard Institution in that of Bobrinsky; the Military Orphans in that of Tschernicheff; the Imperial Cabinet in that of Anitchkoff; the Corps of Pages in that of Woronzoff; and the

General Direction of Roads in that of You-souppoff, &c.; all splendid buildings, which formerly were the scenes of private magnificence and ostentation, but now are absorbed into that great abyss of wealth and power which surrounds the throne.

On my return from one of these walks, through a street which seemed quite uninhabited, I saw quickly advancing a simple sledge with one horse, and a bearded coachman as usual, in which was seated an officer, wrapped up in the common gray cloak of the guards, who seemed to be hurrying towards his parade, as if apprehensive of being too late. We soon met, and I then at once saw that it was the Emperor. At the moment when I had been reflecting with wonder on his immense wealth, and power, and possessions, I beheld the owner himself not only unattended by guards, but without a single servant in his train, driving through the streets of his capital, with as much unpretending ease and simplicity as an ensign in his own regiment of guards. I know not how other people may feel on the occasion, but the Emperor Nicholas in his humble equipage was a greater object of interest to me, as a stranger, than if I had met him in a coach and eight horses, surrounded by a regiment of cuirassiers.

I wish I could do justice to the character of this Emperor, because he is so little known in England. I cannot of course speak from my own knowledge, but I have the best opportunity of hearing it daily discussed by those who are competent judges, who are themselves by their position here completely independent of his authority, and all speak most highly of his talents in public, and his virtues in private life. I can imagine that many Russians may be well aware of the vicious construction of this mighty fabric, may see it with regret themselves, and may from a proper national feeling be anxious to conceal it from the observation of Europe, in which they have been partially successful. But if in the general interdiction of political remarks from hence, the qualities of the Emperor Nicholas are also to be kept in the shade, it is a positive injustice to him, and a loss to the country also.

I have never yet mentioned the living in Russia. If I were only to judge by my hotel, it would not deserve much commendation, as the cookery is bad, and the frozen meat which is used in those establishments is very tasteless; but at the great dinners in private houses, which are always preceded by a little service of caviar and salted her-

rings, with a glass of Schnaps, you meet with every luxury. The suppers, after the balls, are even more abundant than the dinners, and served in regular courses, with soups, hot entrées, and a splendid dessert in conclusion. Here I have tasted the celebrated Sterlits brought from the Wolga, which is a delicacy unknown to European epicures. The immense quantity of fish in which that river abounds would almost appear fabulous. The Emperor Paul, whose friendships, as well as his hatreds, were always carried to excess, gave to the two Princes Kourakin the right of fishery at the mouth of the Wolga. This privilege is farmed by a Russian merchant, named Sapojnikoff, at the enormous annual rent of 900,000 Rs., who has thereby realized for himself an immense fortune. Sturgeons are caught there weighing two thousand four hundred pounds; and the salmon, carp, trout, &c., are out of all proportion to the ordinary size of fish in Europe.

Yours ever.

LETTER XXII.

Murders committed with impunity.—Instance of presence of Mind.—A Masquerade.—Tzarskoe Zeloe.—Alexander in his Retreat.

Petersburg, 1st March, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

THE other night in society the conversation turned on murders, which are not unfrequent among the lower orders here, though seldom mentioned, as the very limited public press never takes any cognizance of such events. Pouschkin, the poet, said with much gravity, “*Le plus interessant assassin, que j’ai jamais connu, étoit un domestique, que j’avois il y a quelque tems.*” It appears that this man had committed eight murders with impunity, the ninth was detected, and his confession was to the following effect:—

He had hired a sledge at Tzarskoe Zeloe

for a course, which was to cost him fifty copecks. During the drive, he began to reflect that if he killed the Ishvosknick (or coachman,) he should certainly save the fare, and perhaps find some money in his pocket. He, therefore, very quietly took out his knife, stabbed him in the back, and then cut his throat. On rifling the wretched driver, he found only twenty-four copecks; he, therefore, murdered a fellow-creature on calculation for the sum of about eightpence sterling.

A horrid instance of the same kind occurred here only two nights ago. A mougik hired a sledge to cross the Neva, when it was very dark, and he knew he must escape observation. As soon as they had reached the middle of the river, he murdered the driver on his seat, and, leaving the body on the ice, conducted the horse and sledge to his own home. The latter he broke up, and converted immediately into firewood: the former he had the folly to lead the next morning to the market for sale. In the mean time the corpse had been discovered by the police, and the horse was recognised by the neighbours, which led to the immediate detection of the murderer. He was instantly arrested, and so summary was the judgment, that in the short space of twenty-four hours

the crime was committed, detected, and justice executed. The sentence was severe knouting, (almost equal to death,) and perpetual labour in the mines of Siberia.

In virtue of a ukase, issued by the Empress Elizabeth, no crime in this country is punishable by death; but the Emperor, who is all powerful, may sign a ukase to that effect for any particular case of delinquency, (as he did in the case of the conspirators,) but it is not the regular law of the land.

Some little time back a gentleman was saved from a similar fate by a presence of mind which would not have occurred to every one. He was also crossing the river at night in a sledge, and, having dined with some convivial friends, had begun to slumber. He suddenly awoke, and found himself on the ice, mastered by the driver, who was endeavouring to strangle him. All hope of assistance in such a deserted spot was vain, and death seemed inevitable; but his superstitious assassin still insisted on his crossing himself before he died. He made use of this respite, to beg the farther indulgence of taking one last pinch of snuff, which was granted. The snuff-box once in his hand, he threw the whole contents into the face and eyes of his assailant, which so completely

blinded him, that the victim was enabled to make his escape.

It was unfortunately too dark to distinguish the number which these drivers are ordered to wear on a metal plate attached to their back, and the villain thus avoided farther detection. These circumstances tend to prove, what I have before remarked, that the life of a human being here is considered of very little importance.

A very handsome suite of rooms has just been fitted up in the Perspective by Mr. Engelhart, on a speculation similar to that of our Argyll Rooms, for public entertainments. No expense has been spared to fit them for this object, but the habits of the country are so little calculated for such meetings, that it is not supposed it will be very beneficial to the projector. A masquerade was given there on the 25th ultimo, which, on account of the novelty, was fully attended. A splendid box was prepared for the Imperial family, in which appeared the Empress with her suite and demoiselles d'honneur, amongst whom Mesdemoiselles Yatsoff and Ourousoff were very much admired. The Emperor, during the whole night, walked about alone, to receive the homage of his court: once or twice he conducted the Empress through the

crowd, who again retired to her box. If a masquerade is seldom productive of much gaiety in other countries, what must it be in inanimate Russia? The proportion of men to women was about twenty-five to one. The former unmasked, and (except the few foreigners) all in uniform, which on no pretext can ever be laid aside, and a short crape domino thrown over the shoulder. The latter were masked and silent. The dæmon wore no mask, he seemed quite at home, and gifted with ubiquity. The most prominent mask in the room was a woman dressed with much taste, who excited a general interest by her apparent bashfulness and timidity. She was young and handsome, as far as her features could be distinguished; but when she sat down to supper, ten successive glasses of Champagne betrayed the secret, and the interesting maid proved to be a man. The very disproportionate number of men compared to the women at this assembly, rendered the *dénouement* more remarkable, as every one was intent on observing the unknown fair, who had created a great sensation.

Though the winter is not favourable to a country excursion, I thought it necessary to take a cursory view of Tzarskoe Zeloe, which is about twenty wersts from St. Petersburg,

and is the favourite summer residence of the Emperor. It was originally built by the Empress Catherine the First, spouse of Peter the Great, on a small scale; but its present magnificence dates from the Empress Elizabeth, who carried her extravagance so far as to gild the roofs, cornices, and external bas-reliefs of this palace.

The severity of the seasons, which can be regulated by no Ukase, produced every year incessant dilapidations in this costly decoration, and the repairs became so expensive, that a yellow varnish has since been substituted for the metal, and the roof has been painted a light green, which has a very good, though less dazzling, effect. This alteration was made by Catherine, whose lofty views found other employment for her wealth than exposing it to the wear and tear of the elements. That princess was very much attached to this residence, and contributed much to its embellishment: the Emperor Paul alone, animated by that hatred which he bore to every thing that reminded him of his mother, could never be induced to inhabit it. The park and gardens are laid out with considerable taste, but a thick coat of snow, which clothed the surface of the ground, was not calculated to show them off

to advantage. The house is of no particular order, but the façade altogether is magnificent, and has the air of a royal residence; near it is a Chinese village, composed of fifteen small houses, which are occupied, when the court is here, by the generals and aide-de-camps of the Emperor's staff. As to the interior of this palace, I have already described so many, that I will not subject you to that which must be only repetition. At one end is placed a noble gallery, in which the busts and statues of both ancients and moderns, gods and mortals, are blended together in a most amusing confusion. A Venus de Medicis is placed between Solon and Lycurgus, like Susannah between the two elders; Louis Quatorze, in marble, is ogling a Medusa, in bronze; while our countryman, Charles Fox, with Lucullus on one side, and Cicero on the other, knits his bushy eyebrows, and seems undecided whether he would dine with the one, or debate with the other.

Alexander was passionately fond of this enchanting spot; here was the scene of his youthful pleasures, endeared by the recollection of a grandmother, who adored him, and whose memory he revered. During the first happy years of his reign, this was the favourite retreat in summer from the cares of

business and turmoils of state; when, at a later period, grief and disappointment had broken his spirit, and the ingratitude of his own subjects had disgusted him with human nature, here he came to ponder in solitude on good intentions frustrated and dark conspiracies formed against his life. He gradually abandoned all those amusements which formerly he was the foremost to encourage; the theatrical representations at the Hermitage were entirely given up; the private houses, he sometimes deigned to visit, were studiously avoided; the meetings with the foreign ambassadors, except for particular audiences, were limited to three or four times in the year; in the midst of this great capital, and surrounded by a numerous court, he became at last almost invisible to every one, except his own family. Glad to escape from all interruption, he would, even in the most rigorous season of the year, privately quit St. Petersburg, and retire for a few days to Tzarskoe Zeloe, accompanied only by a single aide-de-camp, who happened to be on duty at the time. There he would remain invisible even to that officer, who only caught a glimpse of him occasionally as he passed through the apartments on his way to the gardens, where he was accustomed to stroll

about pensive and alone. Under the same melancholy impressions, he would plan and execute journeys of fifteen hundred leagues to the extreme points of his empire, hoping, perhaps, that change of scene, and varied employment, might give some relief to his disordered imagination, or at least baffle the views of his enemies. One last journey was made from which he never returned.

I am sorry to hear such bad accounts from France: a person from Bordeaux told me yesterday, that a very discontented spirit exists in the provinces against the government, and that, in many instances, they have refused to pay the regular taxes.

Yours ever.

LETTER XXIII.

The Imperial Stables.—Carriages for the Imperial Family.—Housings, Saddles, &c.—Hazard-table.—Another Masquerade.—Heroine of the Night.—Awe of the Emperor.—His despotic power.—Exorbitant taxation of foreign manufactures.—Improbability of any attempt by Russia on our Indian Possessions.

Petersburg, 4th March, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

I WAS indebted to the politeness of Prince Dolgorucki yesterday, for a view of the Imperial stables, which are built at the junction of the Moika and the Catherina canal, and are calculated to contain fifteen hundred horses. The Prince, whose situation answers to that of our Master of the Horse, has introduced great order and neatness in this department, but it did not strike me as correspondent with

the magnificence of the Emperor's establishment in other respects. There are numberless horses of various descriptions, but very few of superior value, though the building itself is worthy of remark.

The carriages, both for the Imperial family and the court, are much inferior to those of any private gentleman in England, and there seems to be a general indifference to the luxury of equipage in the country. The most curious objects, which I saw, were the old gilt state-carriages, which have been preserved since the time of Peter the Great and Catherine; some, of the most extraordinary forms and dimensions; one was like a summer-house on wheels, with a table in the middle. There was a numerous collection of embroidered housings and saddles, with Turkish and Persian bridles; these latter were studded with amethysts, turquoises, and other precious stones. They were chiefly presents from the Sultan and the Asiatic sovereigns.

The prince drove me in his own sledge, which was drawn by a very fine gray horse, one of the Emperor's Arabs. I observed in his dressing-room a new importation from England of Crowther's whips. He also showed me a hazard-table, which had just

been made after an English pattern, with a box of Crockford's counters; and he had procured an English groom-porter, to teach the odds and rules of the game, which, to my surprise, were unknown in Russia, where dice, though in constant use, only serve for the game of *pâsse dix*. His manners, like those of all the well-bred Russians, are extremely agreeable and prepossessing.

Another masquerade has been given by Prince Wolskonky to the Emperor and Empress, who seem to enjoy this amusement infinitely more than the surrounding courtiers. To the one, it serves as a pretext for emancipation from etiquette; while to the others, it only seems like playing with the lion, and increases their anxiety. In order to enliven the scene, Prince Wolskonky invited the actors and actresses from the theatre, to join the group; but even French levity was not proof against the general awe inspired by the presence of the Imperial family.

The only person who shone pre-eminently on this occasion was a Mademoiselle B——ff, a child of fifteen years, just emerged from the nursery, who had never been out before. Wrapped in a domino, and feeling security from her mask, she gave way to all the high

spirits and good humour which such a scene would naturally inspire at that happy age. Heedless of the slippery ground on which all around her were treading with so much caution and anxiety, she chatted and laughed with every one who approached her, without excepting the great personage himself, who, attracted by her artless, innocent mirth, was delighted with the naïveté of her manner, and anxious to know her name. He saw at last some signs of communication between the young lady and her uncle, the *Maître des Postes*, from whom he learnt the secret. He then commanded her to unmask, and, taking her kindly by the hand, presented her immediately to the Empress, in the most amiable manner, who received her with equal affability. Mademoiselle B——ff was the heroine of the night.

This constant awe of the Emperor, which pervades all classes of society here, is almost incomprehensible to a foreigner, who is hardly able to appreciate the weight of that despotic power with which he is invested; more particularly as I can hear of no one instance on record of caprice or injustice in his conduct; and certainly his manner, though dignified, seems full of amenity. I suppose, however, the conviction that liberty, proper-

ty, and even life, are solely dependant on the will of a sovereign, must affect the nervous system, and strew the path of all alike with care and apprehension. This power extends as well to the Russian subject when abroad, as to him who remains at home. The traveller, who cannot depart without express permission, must always return to show himself at the end of five years, under pain of confiscation of his fortune, and is always liable to be ordered back to the mother-country at the shortest notice; while the remittance of property abroad, for the purpose of emigration, is watched with such unceasing vigilance by the government, that it is almost impracticable. All these regulations, which are of no new date, chime in completely with the views of Nicholas, who, from the moment he ascended the throne, has adopted a policy which is destined to be purely Russian, untainted by any partiality to foreign ideas and doctrines. He saw at one glance the danger which his brother Alexander had incurred from his strong bias towards those principles, and as they seemed to give offence to the nation, he has turned round upon them, and said, "If you choose, then, to be governed *à la Russe*, be it so." He therefore decided at once to exclude every system

of policy which comes from the West, with as much vigour and energy as his great predecessor Peter I., when intent on reforming his barbarous subjects, excluded every thing which came from the East. The task is one of great difficulty, as, amidst this system of exclusion, it is necessary to keep up a redoubled communication with Europe, in order to gain lessons of industry and mechanics, which may finally render Russia more completely independent of her neighbours.

At this present moment there is hardly an object of foreign manufacture which is not exorbitantly taxed; and so rigid is the exaction, that even my friend —, who is attached to the British embassy, was obliged to pay a duty on such a trifle as a set of uniform buttons. Time was when the English were a favoured nation in Russia, and this factory enjoyed peculiar advantages beyond other countries, both in the import and export trade; the looms of Yorkshire were kept in constant activity by the great demand for broadcloth, and every other produce of British manufacture was admitted for sale to the great benefit of our commerce. Now, however, the case is altered: the export trade is thrown open indiscriminately to all nations, and ours is ruined by the com-

petition. On the other hand, prohibitions and duties, with a view to encourage internal manufactures, no longer permit any market for the produce of British industry. These, indeed, are so severe, that when put in the scale against Mr. Huskisson's *free system* on our side, they exhibit a deplorable balance against us. But to return to my subject: while trammels are laid on the introduction of foreign manufactures, every inducement is held out to import that machinery which creates them, and to allure foreign workmen into the country. With the same view, while the Russian nobility, who would probably return with liberal ideas imbibed in foreign lands, find great difficulty in obtaining permission to travel, and are not allowed in any case to carry with them their sons, who are grown up, the merchants, whether free or not, are encouraged to go abroad, and collect commercial information of every description, which may afterwards be practically developed at home on their return. It is impossible to predict how far this policy may ultimately succeed; but the geographical resources of this empire are so great, that if mechanical knowledge and industrious habits could once be established, there is certainly a wide scope for improve-

ment in all the arts of peace, which would do more to civilize the barbarous masses than a hundred military colonies.

There is one subject which, from time to time, is repeated in England, as an alarm-bell to rouse the nation against the power of Russia, which is the apprehension of an attack from that quarter upon our Indian possessions; but I hear nothing from the most sanguine advocates of Russian aggrandizement, which would make me think that sensible men have ever seriously entertained the idea of such an impracticable project. I have seen Russian officers, who have lately travelled into the country which separates their farthest provinces from our Indian frontier, and all agree in their description of the dangers and difficulties attendant on such a journey, even for a private individual, much more for a numerous army. Some reasoners go farther, and pretend to wish that we should even advance our Indian outposts towards their province of Kaboul; in order that we might meet amicably at that distant point, and co-operate mutually in promoting an overland communication from thence with Europe, which would ensure to them the benefits of a carrying trade through Russia, and would be of great advantage to those

English who are established on that boundary of our Indian empire. I listen, however, with caution to any expression from that quarter, of a wish that we should extend our influence and power in any shape. On the other hand, if war should ever be declared between the two countries, there is hardly a doubt that the scene of action will be in the East, though not in that direction of India. We have little reason to apprehend a second invasion of Cossacks into the fertile plains of Europe, by the same road which they took in the year 1813: but Constantinople and the Bosphorus are always there, as a source of future litigation.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

Strict observance of Lent.—The Russian Carnival.—Inspection of a Regiment on Parade.—Duties of a Governor in the provinces.—Municipal regulations.—Napoleon's Mameluke.—Triumphal arch.—The Field of Mars.—English politics.

Petersburg, 10th March, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

THE season of Lent, which is here carefully observed, at least as to outward appearance, commenced on the 5th instant, and the theatres were closed; but as a certificate of indisposition from a medical man may absolve the patient from fasting, a marked alteration has suddenly taken place in the health of this capital. The carnival closed on the preceding night with a masked ball given by Count S. Potocki, whose entertainments always take the lead in splendour and hospitality.

It differed little from those which preceded

it, except in a fanciful idea of the host, who had dressed his numerous servants as Venetian masks: the porter received the guests at the door in the character of Punch; and even the large statue on the staircase, which held lights, was arrayed in a domino and mask. The fair on the Grande Place before the palace, which for the last fortnight has attracted all the population to its booths, its roundabouts, its pantomimes, and its ice-hills, is now broke up, and leaves not a wreck behind: high and low must now look forward to forty days of penance and reflexion.

I went the other morning to breakfast with an officer in the Chevalier Garde, at his barracks, in order to see the parade of his regiment in the Riding-house: it was a sight which amply repaid the trouble of rising early, and sledging through this pinching climate. The men are well disciplined, and have a fine military appearance; but the horses attracted my attention from their beauty and docility; they are highly dressed in the *manège*, and when the martial music struck up, they seemed to dance *en cadence*, and mark the time with their feet like clock-work. Instead of the mixture of colours, which is generally seen in our cavalry, the greatest care is taken that the horses of each

regiment should be uniform in every respect, both in size, shape, and colour, which adds very much to the general effect. The Imperial Guard is an army in itself; the infantry consists of the Ismailoffsky, Semenoffsky, Preobajensky, Paulowsky regiments, with the grenadiers and chasseurs; the cavalry consists of the chevalier guard, the horse-guards, the hussars, the dragoons, the lancers, the pioneers, and the artillery.

I have occasionally alluded to the governors in the provinces, without informing you what are the duties of that officer. He is appointed by the crown, and intrusted with the superintendence of the whole district; his functions comprise the police department, and the general administration of the government; which latter branch also includes the posts, the repair of roads, the inspection of recruits, the passage of troops, and the civil tribunals. He is in constant correspondence with the minister of police at St. Petersburg, with the senate, and with the minister of justice. In any case of peculiar urgency he is authorized to write direct to the Emperor. It is also from his office that all foreigners must procure a permission to make any stay in the province, and travellers must receive their *padarojna*, or order, to obtain post.

horses. The Vice-Governor is deputed to inspect all the financial arrangements; he collects the taxes, regulates the indirect contributions through his subalterns, such as the salt and the sale of spirits, of which the state reserves to itself the exclusive privilege. He presides over the board of revenue, he examines all the accounts of receipts and payments, provides the funds for public buildings, and those of the crown, pays their salaries to the government agents, and after having satisfied all the local demands, he remits the surplus to the Imperial exchequer.

The police of all the towns in the province is managed by a Gorodidchi, or mayor; that of the surrounding country belongs to the captain of the district, who is called the Ispradvnik. The first of these is nominated by the crown, the second by the nobles. The service of the engines, the lighting and cleansing the streets, the numbering of the houses, the signs, the passports, the billeting of troops, the disputes between landlord and tenant, and the sanitary measures for health, are referred to the police department.

The municipal regulations are in the hands of the burghers and the merchants, who are elected among themselves, and retain the appellation of magistrates. One of their prin-

cial occupations is, to receive the declarations of householders, and to fix the amount of contributions to be levied on those fixtures, which are taxed in proportion to the ground which they occupy, or the value of their situation. The magistrate collects that tax, and the proceeds are destined to the repairs of houses belonging to the crown, the cleansing of canals, the purchase of straw for the prisons and barracks, the subsistence of prisoners, and afterwards to the embellishment of the town, the erection of bridges, &c. The payment of the Boutchniks, or guards, stationed in the streets, and of the firemen, is also defrayed out of the municipal funds. These magistrates also determine the cases of exemption from billeting troops, and various other private discussions which arise amongst individuals on the subject of rents and repairs, &c. The captain of the district has no right to interfere in their decisions, which are generally given with great impartiality; and it is only justice to add, that this higher class of peasantry in Russia is, in most instances, remarkable for its natural good sense, and the purity of its intentions. Whenever I hear this remark, it always brings with it the sickening reflection, that men of such

description, and also Christians, should be placed by fate in a position which renders them as much the property of their master as the horse which he rides.

It is a singular fact, that Roustan, the Mameluke of Napoleon, was originally a Russian subject. He was born at Karabagh, a province between Elizabeth Poland Tauris, was carried off as a slave by the Persians, during one of their later incursions, and sold to the Turks. From thence he was sent to Egypt, where he was incorporated with the Mamelukes, whose bands are often recruited among the slaves which come from the Caucasus and the Persian border.

As you enter St. Petersburg by the road from Strelna, there is a triumphal arch dedicated to the Empress Catherine, in honour of the combat of Tchesme. It is surmounted by six horses abreast harnessed to the car of Victory, and adorned with colossal statues and bas-reliefs, which attract the eye at a distance; but when you approach the spot, and find only a dilapidated mass of lath and plaster, the effect is rather laughable. The original intention was to erect it in marble, but the execution has been so long delayed, that the elements will soon destroy this pa-

per model entirely, which now looks like a temporary decoration left to decay after the fair was over.

Near the marble palace of the Grand-duke Constantine, is a fine open square, formerly named the Meadow of the Czarine, but now called the Field of Mars: it is chiefly used for the exercises of the troops; and at each extremity are placed two monuments, one an obelisk, with inscriptions, to commemorate the victories of Marshal Romanzow, the other a colossal statue of General Suwarrow, in Roman armour. He is represented in a menacing attitude, and protecting with his shield three crowns, alluding to his campaigns in Italy, when he defended the joint cause of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. I forgot to mention, that the statue of Peter the Great bears the following inscription, in Russian as well as in Latin:

PETRO PRIMO,
CATHARINA SECUNDA,
1782.

Your interesting letter of the 10th ult., has, owing to the weather, been long on the road, but is just arrived. The tragical end of poor —— has made me shudder; that in-

famous Sunday press may now revel in the mischief and misery which it is always so anxious to create.

What a picture do you give of English politics and financial embarrassments! but if Mr. Davenport's motion on the state of the nation has already lasted three days, and is likely to occupy as many more, we might hope that the collective talents of the sapient debaters would hit upon some remedy for the evil; though a deficiency of 1,400,000*l.* in the revenue must be paid in more solid coin than long-winded speeches and theoretical projects. I have the greatest faith in the honesty and good intentions of our present rulers, and hope they may be able to stem the surrounding difficulties; still the money must be found, somewhere; as the old lady said, on refusing her daughter to a worthy but needy suitor, "*On ne fait pas des soupes de mérite, ni des fricassées de vertu, dans ce monde.*"

I see that Lord Melbourne has taken up the question of Portugal, while other attacks are preparing by his auxiliaries on the subjects of Greece, Mexico, Cuba, foreign policy, and the currency; the enemy is up in every quarter, and what is still more fatally ominous, there are sad dissensions in the tory

camp. There seems indeed, as you say, an approaching storm in the horizon; three parties, the Whigs, the Huskissonians, and the Mountain are joined in coalition to attack the government; but when I see by the papers that ridiculous person — utter his invectives against the noble lion in his distress, I am tempted to exclaim with La Fontaine,

*Il attend son destin sans faire aucunes plaintes ;
Quand voyant l'âne même à son antre accourir,
Ah ! c'est trop, lui dit-il, je voulois bien mourir ;
Mais c'est mourir deux fois que souffrir tes atteintes.*

It is rather amusing to see a vote of thanks to the ultra tory Lord B—— proposed by old Cobbett. I am glad to hear you were so well amused with the party at Witley: how could it be otherwise under that most hospitable roof? What a contrast to the life I am leading here! Much as I should have been delighted in being with you, I should have been very sorry to have joined that which you mention went to C——.

Yours ever,

LETTER XXV.

Barbarous and inhospitable Custom.—Russian Climate.—Travel-
ling on the Ice.—French table d'hôte.—Espionage.—Turkish
Law.—Instance of the Administration of Justice in Constanti-
nople.

Petersburg, 16th March, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

ALTHOUGH mine is not a sentimental jour-
ney, I find that I am like Sterne's starling—
“I can't get out.” This morning I casually
observed to my servant, that I might proba-
bly in a few days set out for Paris, but I soon
found that *vouloir* is not *pouvoir*. I must
announce my intention publicly in the Ga-
zette three weeks before I can obtain a pass-
port. The object of this unnecessary shackle
I cannot comprehend, unless it be, that as
few strangers visit this distant capital, their

stay should be prolonged to make up for the absence of others. There is something so galling in this idea of restraint, that I shall now feel very anxious to quit this country, which, on the other hand, affords no amusement to counterbalance this unusual interference with personal liberty. It is said to originate in a suspicion that foreigners might incur debts and leave them unpaid; but I should think that the wary character of the natives, and the long dreary road to the frontier, might set their minds at rest on that subject. At all events, it is a barbarous and inhospitable custom, and an attempt to subject a foreigner to a part of that odious system which prevails universally throughout the country.

We had yesterday a shower of rain, but it is no indication of spring, as the frost continues, without intermission to-day. Catherine called the St. Petersburg summer "the green winter;" and as that season is generally accompanied with frequent rain, she summed up the climate by saying, "We have eight months of winter, and four months of bad weather." At times I am told it is very hot, and there is hardly any night; the moon is so bright that you may read a newspaper at midnight without a candle. When the

thaw really arrives, its approaches are gradual; but instances have been known when a few hours have been sufficient to loosen the icy surface of the Neva, and then very serious accidents have occurred. This may be caused by a sudden veering of the wind to south-west, which if it should happen during the night, comes upon the inhabitants unawares in the morning, who resuming their usual path over the perfidious element, with their horses, sledges, and loaded carts, are at times engulfed in the waters.

No sooner is the winter firmly established and the navigation interrupted, than the whole gulf from Cronstadt to St. Petersburg becomes a great high road, on which, for a space of thirty wersts, carriages and goods are constantly moving to and fro with supplies for the capital. As the distance is more than a day's journey for these loaded conveyances, wooden houses, are constructed on the ice to receive the travellers and the cattle, where they put up for the night; and there are frequently not less than fifty houses, with a proportionate number of peasants, sheltered under one roof from the inclemency of the weather. It is not more than two or three years since one of these sudden changes of the wind took place early in the evening; the

humble inn and its dependencies were filled with travellers and their beasts, who retired to rest without have remarked the alteration. They slept through the night totally unconscious of the thaw which was hourly undermining their frail tenement, and when in the morning all were prepared to resume their journey, the ice suddenly gave way, and men, horses, and buildings, were precipitated at once into a watery grave.

Disasters of a less wholesale nature also frequently occur from the holes which are dug in the ice for a supply of water to the town, in which many a nightly wanderer has disappeared and never been seen again till the river has become navigable. In ordinary times, when the usual symptoms have announced the approaching dispartion of the ice, the police is actively employed in preventing all passengers from crossing the river.

As the *ordinaire* of a Russian hotel is not very attractive, I frequently dine with some friend at a French *restaurant*, at the corner of the Perspective, kept by Dubois, where a tolerable dinner is served at a *table d'hôte*, which is frequented in general by very good society. The conversation, I observe, is very guarded, as you may also perceive by the following circumstance, which occurred there

yesterday. At the close of dinner I was seated at one end of the table with three or four individuals of my acquaintance, when the topic of Paris, and the amusements which that capital affords to strangers, was casually introduced, and I was imperceptibly led to draw a comparison between them and the resources to be found at St. Petersburg, not very advantageous to the latter. One of these individuals, a Russian, a man of very superior understanding, who has travelled much in Europe, and has acquired considerable knowledge of the world, maintained, to my surprise, a contrary opinion, and launched out into a most indiscriminate praise of his own capital, which he exalted above any other. I did not attempt to continue the argument, but was certainly at a loss to account for an opinion savouring so much of prejudice, in one whose mind was of a superior cast, and very enlightened on all other subjects. When we rose from table, he took me aside and privately said, "You were perhaps surprised just now at my language, but did you not observe two persons near you who were listening attentively to our conversation? I have no doubt they were spies, and that any unguarded expression from me would have been misinterpreted, and report-

ed this very night to government; and though my character is beyond suspicion, yet still I hold an employment, and the caution is always advisable."

A French gentleman, who was formerly employed by his government at Constantinople, and dines frequently at the house of Dubois, told me the following instance of the manner in which justice is administered at that place, by the cadis or inferior magistrates, when debts are claimed from the natives by foreigners. It may give you some idea of Turkish law.

A manufacturer of Carcassonne arrived at Constantinople with a large investment of cloths, which, by a new process, he had rendered peculiarly fit for the Turkish market. An Armenian dealer was highly pleased with the quality, and bought the whole assortment, for which he paid the owner by his note of hand, falling due at a short term. When the period for payment arrived, the French merchant called upon his debtor with the bill, and demanded the settlement; but great was his surprise, when the other declared he had already paid it. "How can that be true," said the indignant Frenchman, "when here is your own note, and I should

have given it up to you, had it been duly acquitted?

“Your paper is of no consequence,” replied the Armenian; “I have paid the amount and can produce my witnesses, which is of more importance than your title.” In this dilemma, the unfortunate creditor saw no resource left to him but an application to the French ambassador, who, feeling the inefficacy of his own intervention, recommended the plaintiff to put his case into the hands of one of his interpreters, a man of much shrewdness, who had diligently studied the chicanery of Turkish law, and was well aware of the facilities which it offered to dishonest debtors in their transactions with a foreigner. The dragoman having prepared his measures, counselled the merchant to cite the Armenian before the judge. When all were assembled in court, the Frenchman was asked, what was the ground of his complaint? He answered, the settlement of this bill, which that man pretends to have paid.

“What do you reply to this?” said the *cadi* to the defendant.

“That I have already paid it.”

“And why did you then neglect to retain your signature?”

“I did not think it necessary.”

“Have you any witnesses?”

“Yes! here they are.”

Two men immediately advanced from the crowd, and bore testimony to the payment of the note, mentioning certain details to strengthen their evidence, and particularly the hour and the day when it took place.

“You see,” said the judge to the Frenchman; “this man owes you nothing.”

The affair seemed to be decided, the discomfiture of the plaintiff was complete, when the interpreter, who had hitherto remained silent, thus addressed the judge: “We allow that this man did actually pay the note in the manner and at the time that these worthy persons have asserted; but they omit to state, or probably are not aware, that yielding to the entreaties of this Armenian, who made a merit of his punctuality in the first instance, to obtain a longer accommodation, of which he was in great want, we returned him the money afterwards as a private loan, for which he allowed us to retain his note as a security; and to prove this, here are our witnesses.”

Two other individuals then appeared, who testified broadly to the truth of this last assertion, which the dishonest Armenian, not being prepared to rebut, he was immediately

condemned to satisfy the claim, to the great satisfaction of the injured plaintiff.

Your last letter, which I received this morning, is very interesting. Parliament seems to have met under very singular circumstances. I am sorry to hear that respectable institution, the Argyle Rooms, is burnt to the ground.

Yours ever.

LETTER XXVI.

Arrangements for leaving St. Petersburg.—Population of that capital.—Apparent happiness of the People.—Their filthy dress.—Charity of the Russians.—No instances of Suicide in Russia.—Policy of the Emperor Nicholas.—Speculations as to the future influence of Russia.—Adieu to the City of the Czar.

Petersburg, 25th March, 1830.

MY DEAR —,

THIS is probably the last letter which you will receive from me dated in the hyperboreal capital: I have made my arrangements with Lord V—— to journey homewards together as far as Berlin, from whence he will return to England, and I shall proceed to Paris. Instead of ordering the wheels to be greased, they are already taken off the carriages, and packed up behind, which are then placed on sledges, and we have only to

hope that the frost may continue till we pass the frontiers, as a sudden thaw would render the roads dangerous and impassable.

The population itself of this capital, without the military, is not reckoned at more than 340,000 souls, and from the appearance of the streets, I should not have imagined that it was so numerous; but circumstances may account for this air of desertion which is generally remarked. The servants, a very numerous class in all Russian families, are engaged at home; the higher classes seldom walk out on foot; the mechanics are habitually industrious, and rarely quit their workshops from morning till night; and that swarm of loiterers, which frequent the public ways in London and Paris in search of amusement, is here absolutely unknown. It would, therefore, be difficult to form a judgment of the numerical population by the faces which present themselves to general observation. One circumstance, however, is worthy of remark as you pass through the streets, and may reconcile a philanthropist to the monotony of the scene. Those whom you do meet are invariably distinguished by a calm serenity of countenance, which indicates the absence of care and misery. That harassing anxiety to procure the means of

subsistence, which you see marked in the features of so many poor wretches in other countries, is here even in the most bitter weather never perceptible. It is said, that in London and Paris more than 20,000 persons rise in the morning without knowing where to procure a morsel of food, or lay their heads at night. Here the cheapness of provisions, the certainty of employment, and the indifference of the Russian as to nightly accommodation, (for he will contentedly sleep on a stone or a plank,) render him independent; while the conviction that he has a master who superintends his welfare as well as his labour, relieves his mind from all care for the present or thought for the morrow.

There is nothing very attractive in the general aspect of the foot-passengers whom you meet. A foreigner is disgusted with the variety of beards which conceal their features and give them a squalid, dirty appearance; while the uncombed hair, which is cut short and square round the nape of the neck, is equally unbecoming; add to this the general winter attire, which consists of a sheep-skin worn inside outwards, and by constant use become filthy and rancid, and you will allow a Russian mougik to be no agreeable neigh-

bour even in the open air. The better class of tradesmen are more careful of their appearance, but the young men adopt a dress which is neither caftan nor great coat; and the beard, the only relic of the Asiatic costume, suits very ill with the rest. The women, no one knows why, have renounced the national dress entirely, and wear awkwardly enough a caricature imitation of the French fashions.

The Russians are a charitable nation: there are very few beggars, I do not remember to have seen one in the streets; and they are in general ready to assist the distressed. If an escort of soldiers should pass conducting a band of prisoners, you may see the tradesman quit his counter, or the Ischvoshnik his sledge, to contribute something to their relief. At the door of every prison is placed a charity-box, into which even the lower orders silently drop their alms; the contents are examined at night, and it is never found to be empty.

There is another point in which the Russians are distinguished from their more civilized neighbours, and it is to be hoped they may always continue to enjoy that distinction:—there are no suicides. The absence of immediate want preserves the lower orders

from this act of desperation; and the higher classes, entirely occupied with an all-absorbing dread of the sovereign, are little prone to those romantic sentiments, or unruly passions, which lead to such fatal catastrophes in other countries. The unchangeable system of the government, which admits of no innovations, and excludes all party or political feeling, pursues steadily the beaten track. No change of ministry suddenly deprives a long list of dependants of the means of support; no revolution occurs to satiate the needy with the spoils of the rich, and drive a ruined man to acts of despair; no disappointed artist, or *grisette* crossed in love, seeks a refuge from her woes in a pan of charcoal or a watery grave; the nets of the Serpentine and the Seine would find little occupation in the stream of the Neva.

These are the privileges of high civilization, and the Russian has not yet arrived at that pitch of refinement; while the chilling atmosphere which he breathes, regulates the temperature of his blood, and keeps his passions under proper subjection.

The observations to be made on a country, so different from any thing which we have ever seen, would be endless, if I descended into more minute details. I have written to

you those which principally attracted my notice, as a traveller; the rest must come within the province of the historian. Viewing this country with the eye of a free-born Englishman, it is impossible to quit it without the full conviction, that a permanent existence here must be intolerable; though it must be allowed, on the other hand, that the shackles under which all uniformly labour, seem to be the only means by which the complicated machinery of this extensive government could be efficiently directed. Power so despotic in evil hands might, if it lasted, weigh indeed heavily on all; but, wielded by a man who is himself (in all respects) so eminently superior to all around him, and actuated by such praiseworthy motives, it becomes an instrument in the hand of Providence to work out by one absolute will the amelioration of a vast portion of the globe, hitherto left for centuries in a state of degrading barbarism. The new policy of the Emperor Nicholas, who, warned by the fate of his brother, now closes the door against European institutions, which might interfere with his authority, may keep back the advancement of his European subjects for the time; but enough has already been gained by Russia, to impart a vast improve-

ment in the arts of civilized life to those barbarous hordes which form the Asiatic frontier of the empire, notwithstanding the comparatively backward state of the entire country. I am not one of those who are sceptical as to her future influence in promoting the great work of civilization, which is destined, in its turn, to visit every quarter of the globe. As every thing in this world, by the order of Nature, when it has reached the culminating point, turns to decay; when old Europe is worn out, and her present supremacy has faded away before the rise of intellect and power of a new world; when it is become, like the empires of former ages, a mere historical record of the past; it is no very vague conjecture to suppose, that America on one side, and Russia on the other, both placed in immediate contact with the most barbarous nations, may ultimately become the instruments of promoting this great change in the civilized world.

I am diving deep into the womb of time, and treating you with a very useless speculation, as Europe looks well and healthy at present, showing no symptoms of decay; while Russia, as she is in 1830, immersed in a vicious circle of slavery and corruption,

gives little promise of becoming a future regenerator of mankind.

The immense territory of this empire is counterbalanced by the thinness of its population; and the difficulty of circulation from the seat of government to the distant provinces, must oppose great obstacles to an energetic administration of its resources; though, as every thing depends on the will of one man, much time may be saved by quickness of decision. Russia has already outgrown her proportions; she has a great surface of barren intangible land, which is more calculated to embarrass than increase her power, and must give her so much internal occupation, that without some unforeseen provocation, she can have little wish to interfere with her neighbours in Europe. It must be her object to remain at peace, and the present state of her military force is little calculated to alarm the jealousy of foreign powers.

The numerous formalities of obtaining a passport are completed; a long and tedious road lies before me, but it leads to happier climes, and scenes of which I never felt the real value, till they were contrasted with those which I am now about to quit. If Voltaire, on quitting Holland, was tempted

to exclaim, "Adieu Canaux, Canards, Canaille!" I may take the same comprehensive view of the subject here, by saying in my turn, "Adieu Barbons, Barbus, Barbares." Write to me at Paris, at the same hotel as usual.

Yours ever.

GENEALOGY OF THE SOVEREIGNS,

WHO HAVE REIGNED IN RUSSIA, FROM THE YEAR 862 TO
THE PRESENT TIME.

FIRST PERIOD.

A. D.

862.

I. RURIK.

Born amongst the Varegues in 830; died at Novogorod in 879: he left his son Igor, under age, to the guardianship of Oleg.

879.

II. OLEG.

Guardian of Igor; born at Kiew, where he died in 913. He gained possession of Kiew, which became the seat of the Russian empire.

913.

III. IGOR.

Son of Rurik; born at Novogorod in 877, and slain by the Drevlians in 945. He married Olga, and left a son under age.

945.

IV. OLGA.

Wife of Igor; regent during the minority of her son Sviatoslaw; born in 885; died at Kiew in 955. She was a Christian.

A. D.

955. V. SVIATOSLAW.

Son of Igor; born at Kiew in 933; killed by the Petchenegues in 973.

973. VI. JARROPOLK.

Eldest son of Sviatoslaw: born at Kiew, and murdered in the same town, in 980.

980. VII. VLADIMIR,

(*surnamed the Great.*)

Third son of Sviatoslaw; born in 935; and died in 1015. He became a Christian to espouse the Princess Anne, sister of the Emperor of Constantinople. All Russia followed his example. He divided his empire between the ten sons whom he had by six wives.

 SECOND PERIOD.

The Empire Divided.

1015. VIII. SVIATOPOLK.

Posthumous son of Jarropolk, is recognised son of Vladimir, because this last had espoused his brother's wife, already big with Sviatopolk. He died in Bohemia in 1016.

1017. IX. JAROSLAW I.

Son of Vladimir. He gave the first code of laws to the Russians. He died in 1054, after a

A. D.

glorious reign of thirty-five years. He left five sons, to whom he left his estates in partition.

1054.

X. IZIASLAW.

Son of Jaroslaw the First. During this reign, Iviatoslaw the Second, brother of Iziaslaw, usurps the throne: he reigned three years, and died. Iziaslaw remounts the throne: he is killed in combat, in 1078, after a reign of twenty-four years.

1078.

XI. VSEVOLOD.

Son of Jaroslaw: he died of the plague at Kiew, after a reign of fifteen years.

1093.

XII. SVIATOPOLK II.

Son of Iziaslaw: he reigned twenty years.

1113.

XIII. VLADIMIR II.

Son of Vsevolod: he is surnamed Monomach, because his mother was daughter of Constantine Monomach, Emperor of Constantinople. This great man reigned twelve years.

1125.

XIV. MSTISLAW.

Son of Vladimir, and reigned six years.

1132.

XV. JARROPOLK II.

Son of Vladimir, reigned seven years.

1139.

XVI. VIATCHESLAW.

Son of Vladimir, reigned only twelve days: he was dethroned by Vsevolod the Second.

A. D.

1139. XVII. VSEVOLOD II.

Son of Oleg, and grandson of Sviatoslaw II. :
he reigned seven years.

1146. XVIII. IGOR II.

Son of Oleg, and brother to the foregoing :
he reigned thirteen days, and was deposed.

1146. XIX. IZIASLAW II.

Son of Mstislaw, grandson of Vladimir Monomach : he reigned twelve years.

1154. XX. ROSTISLAW,
Son of Mstislaw, and,

XXI. IZIASLAW III.

They only reigned together one year.

1154. XXII. GEORGE, OR JOURI,

Son of Vladimir Monomach : he was surnamed Dolgoroucky (long hand.) The throne of Kiew was consecutively occupied by Iziaslaw, son of David, the Mstislaw, son of Iziaslaw, and Rostislaw, son of Mstislaw : these troubles form an Interregnum, after which,

XXIII. ANDREW,

Son of Dolgoroucky, surnamed Boholubski, transferred his residence to Vladimir, which thus became the metropolis.

A. D.

1157. XXIV. ANDREW,

Son of Jouri Dolgoroucky: he was assassinated by his wife and his brothers-in-law Koutchko.

1175. INTERREGNUM,

During which Mstislaw and Jarrapolk dispute the throne.

1176. XXV. MICHAEL,

Son of Jouri Dolgoroucky.

1177. XXVI. VSEVOLOD III.

Otherwise Dmitri I. son of Jouri.

1213. XXVII. GEORGE, OR JOURI II.

Son of Vsevolod III. dethroned by his brother.

1216. XXVIII. CONSTANTINE,

Surnamed the Wise: he protected literature, and was a great sovereign: he named for his successor the same George, or Jouri, whom he had dethroned.

1218. JOURI II.

Resumed the crown. In this year Baton Khan began his first incursions into Russia: he defeated and killed the Grand-duke in 1237.

THIRD PERIOD.

From the submission of Russia to the Tartars, to the establishment of the first Russian throne at Moscow.

A. D.

1238. XXIX. JAROSLAW II.

Son of Vsevolod : he died on his return from the grand horde, whither he had been sent by Baton Khan. It is generally thought that he was poisoned.

1246. XXX SVIATOSLAW III.

Son of Vsevolod : he was supplanted by his nephew, and died in 1253.

1248. XXXI. MICHAEL II.

Son of Jaroslaw : he was killed after a reign of a few months, fighting with the Lithuanians.

1248. XXXII. ANDREW II.

Son of Jaroslaw : he reigned three years.

1252. XXXIII. ALEXANDER,

Son of Jaroslaw : he was surnamed Newski, on account of his victories over the Swedes on the Neva. He was a great prince, and was canonized by the Greek church after his death. He reigned ten years as Grand-duke, and twenty-three years previously, as hereditary Prince of Novogorod.

1263. XXXIV. JAROSLAW III.

Brother of the preceding : he reigned eight years.

A. D.

1271. XXXV. VASSILEI, OR BASIL,
Son of Jaroslaw.

1276. XXXVI. DMITRI II.

Son of Alexander Newski: he reigned eighteen years, and died, after a troubled reign, in 1294.

1294. XXXVII. ANDREW III.

Son of Alexander Newski.

1295. XXXVIII. DANIEL,

Son of Alexander, Prince of Moscow: he is the first sovereign of that city who took the name and title of Grand-duke. He died in 1303.

1304. XXXIX. MICHAEL III.

Son of Jaroslaw III: he reigned fourteen years. He was condemned to death, and murdered in the horde, whither he had been summoned by Usbek Khan.

1320. XL. JOURI III.

Son of Daniel: he was assassinated in the horde by Dmitri III.

1322. XLI. DMITRI III.

Son of Michael III: he was condemned to death, and executed in the horde.

1325. XLII. ALEXANDER II.

Son of Michael III: he quitted the throne, and fled to Pscow, where he was beheaded in the horde, 1339.

FOURTH PERIOD.

From the first establishment of the Russian throne at Moscow, to the entire escape from the Tartar yoke, the period at which the Grand-dukes took the title of Tzar.

A. D.

1328.

XLIII. IWAN I.

Surnamed Kalita, was the son of Daniel: this prince removed the seat of government to Moscow, which was declared the capital of all the Russiās.

1340.

XLIV. SIMEON,

Surnamed the Superb, son of Iwan I.

1353.

XLV. IWAN II.

Interregnum.

1360.

XLVI. DMITRI IV.

Son of Constantine, and Prince of Souzdal, obtained from the Khan the grand principality: after a reign of two years he was deposed, and the throne restored to the rightful heir.

1362.

XLVII. DMITRI V.

Surnamed Donskoie; he was son of Iwan II.: he reigned twenty-six years with glory, but he had the misfortune to see Moscow taken and burnt by the Tartars in 1382.

1389.

XLVIII. VASSILEI, OR BASIL II.

Son of Dmitri Donskoie: he imposed a tax on Novogorod.

A. D.

1425. XLIX. VASSILEI, OR BASIL III.

Surnamed Temnoi, or the Blind: under his reign the first coin was struck in Russia.

1446. L. THE USURPER, PRINCE DMITRI JOURIEWITCH,

Surnamed Chimiaka, occupied the throne only a few months.

1447. VASSILEI IS RESEATED ON THE THRONE,

And died after a reign of thirty-seven years.

FIFTH PERIOD.

From the throwing off of the Tartar yoke, to the accession of the Romanow family to the throne.

1462. LI. IWAN III. VASSILEIWITCH.

Surnamed the Proud: he united the different principalities, conquered Novogorod, shook off the yoke of the Tartars, and exacted tribute from the kingdom of Kasan.

1505. LII. VASSILEI IV. IWANOVITCH.

Surnamed the Courageous.

1534. LIII. IWAN IV. VASSILEIWITCH;

Surnamed the Threatening Tzar: he conquered the kingdoms of Kasan and Astrakan; Siberia was also subdued in his reign.

A. D.

1584. LIV. THEODORE IWANOVITCH

Tzar: with him expired the dynasty of Rurik, which reigned 736 years.

1598. LV. BORIS,
Feodorovitch Godounov.

1605. LVI. THEODORE II.

Borisovitch: he was strangled by order of the usurper Otrepieo, who gave himself out as Prince Dmitri, son of Tzar Iwan the IV.

1605. LVII. DMITRI,

A usurper; reigned eleven months, and was killed.

1606. LVIII. VASSILI, IWANOVITCH CHOUISKY.

1610. INTERREGNUM.

SIXTH PERIOD.

From the accession of the Romanow family, to the present time. The states assembled elect a Tzar.

1613. I. MICHAEL.

He reigned thirty-two years.

1645. II. ALEXIS.

He increased the empire, and reigned thirty years.

162 SOVEREIGNS OF RUSSIA.

A. D.

1676. III. THEODORE III.

1682. IV. IWAN ALEXIEVITCH }
PETER ALEXIEVITCH } reign together.

1689. V. PETER I.

He takes the title of Emperor. Posterity call him Peter the Great.

1725. VI. CATHERINE I.

1727. VII. PETER II.
Grandson of Peter I.

1730. VIII. ANNE IWANOVNA,
Niece of Peter I.

1740. IX. IWAN II.

He is proclaimed Emperor during his minority, and died in the same year.

1741. X. ELIZABETH,
Daughter of Peter I.

1761. XI. PETER III.
Murdered.

1762. XII. CATHERINE II.

Wife of Peter III: she succeeded him, and added to his estates the Crimea, Azof, a part of Kouban, all the countries between the Dnieper, the Boug, the Dniester, and the Black Sea.

A. D.

1796.

XIII. PAUL I.

Her son, murdered.

1801.

XIV. ALEXANDER I.

Died of a broken heart.

1825.

XV. NICHOLAS I.

The reigning Emperor.

ADDENDA.

October 3d, 1837.

SEVEN years have elapsed since these cursory Remarks on the state of Russia were made by a traveller, who wrote to a friend a summary detail of the different objects which presented themselves to his view; and though not without sources of good information on the spot, has given at the best but a very crude and hasty sketch of the system, moral and political, of that overgrown power. The few facts of interest, which came within the scope of what may be called a familiar correspondence, have only the merit of truth; if the occasional comments should be deemed by some to savour of prejudice or harshness, the unimportance of the writer must render them perfectly innocuous, or at least a matter of general indifference.

The nineteenth century commenced with a series of events in Europe, so wonderful and so appalling, that no one generation since the world began ever witnessed such an era. We, who have lived in these stirring times, may feel that we have seen the work of whole centuries accomplished during our own short span of existence. The crumbling of a throne, the downfall of a kingdom, were then only accidents of daily occurrence; the civil death of a reigning family was pronounced with as little ceremony, and often with more levity, than the sentence of a common malefactor. A gigantic power had suddenly arisen, in defiance of every obstacle, which for a short period clenched within its iron grasp the destinies of civilized Europe. There are laws in the moral, as well as in the physical world, which are sure and unerring: excess produces ruin; the abuse of power, as well as the abuse of health, must ultimately recoil on the sinner.

The ambition of Napoleon produced its natural fruits; use led on to abuse, abuse led on to resistance; the oppressed nations rose at last *en masse*, and hurled him from his throne.

Fifteen years of superficial tranquillity had scarcely allowed to disheartened Europe suf-

ficient time to forget the chains under which she had lately groaned, when a fresh volcano, whose subterraneous fermentation had been scarcely audible, burst forth at once and filled the minds of men with panic and confusion.

It was only a few months preceding this catastrophe, that I was residing in St. Petersburg; and when I now look round at the vast changes which, during the last seven years, this event has produced in European policy, it is natural to glance at the rapid progress which, owing to inevitable circumstances, Russia has been enabled to make during that short period, both in moral improvement and formidable strength.

In 1830, Russia had merely the wreck of an army—her guards and garrisons. In 1837, we may look at the immense military display at Wosnesensk,* merely for amusement, while other armies are employed in Circassia and Poland, or quartered in other parts of the empire, without reckoning the distant hordes of Cossacks, which may be

* I may here advert to a scandalous calumny which has readily found its way into the English and French papers, that during the continuance of this camp at Wosnesensk, six hundred young girls had been taken away from their families in the Polish provinces, and brought to the camp to contribute to the pleasures of the soldiery. This gross statement I am able to contradict from the most undeniable authority.

summoned at a moment's notice. In 1830, Russia was far behind the nations of Europe in all kinds of manufacture or industrial produce. In 1837, we may view the improvements in those branches made at Moscow, and the different governments in that direction, which permit a repeal of duties on foreign goods, and maintain an ability to compete with them. This statement may, perhaps, be exaggerated, but the start given to industry and mechanical knowledge is incontestable. In 1830, every thing I saw convinced me that Russia had certainly not the power, perhaps not even the wish, to increase her conquests. In 1837, what do we see? A powerful fleet in the Black Sea; a war in Circassia; the treaty of Unkiarskellessi, which gives her the key of the Dardanelles; and an influence obtained with the Porte, which no European diplomacy can overturn. Russia has now established herself in the midst of the divided populations of Anatolia, Persia, Georgia, and the Caucasus: she occupies almost the entire tract of country which separates the Caspian from the Black Sea, and guards with vigilance the two passages of the Caucasus. Here is the great secret of her jealousy about the navigation of that sea: she is sensible of the progressing

improvement of her commerce; and her present views will not be satisfied, till she has monopolized the whole trade with the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas, to the utter exclusion of English interference. To what is this hostile spirit attributable? To the foreign policy adopted by England ever since the accession of the present government.

If I may have been led into a false conception on some points, I had still good grounds for my opinion at that period, and the same conviction was then felt by heads much wiser and better informed than mine. As far as regards the internal improvements in Russia, they are highly creditable to the fostering hand of the Emperor, and the rising industry and perseverance of the inhabitants; but my impression of the state of the Russian armies in 1830 was confirmed unequivocally even two years later, by the long and tedious struggle with the Poles, when all the disposable force of the empire was arrayed against the unfortunate city of Warsaw, and could only succeed, after months of fruitless warfare, in gaining possession of that capital.

Now the military colonies have replenished those ranks which were wasted by the plague and the Turkish campaign, every effort has been made to place the army on a most for-

midable footing. The critical state of Europe was a sufficient pretext, while Austria and Prussia were taking the same effective measures; but, now that a general disarmament has been gradually adopted, Russia remains alone at the full stretch of her war establishment, without an idea of reduction, till she has accomplished her own purposes.

The power to extend her conquests, I am bound to confess, has been wonderfully augmented during this important period. Next may come the inquiry, how far the wish of employing that power, to the detriment of her neighbours, may prevail in the present policy of the Emperor of Russia. He has taken haughty strides of late; he has kept the even tenor of his way, unbiassed by French cajolery, and unintimidated by English menace. It would seem that dreams of conquest are revived; that a captious jealousy of foreign powers is at work; that a selfish occupation of the Black Sea, to the exclusion of other flags, is contemplated; while Constantinople is held in pawn for the good conduct of Europe, and ready to be seized on the first demonstration of a hostile feeling in that quarter. These are grave facts staring us in the face, and, if we decide at once, that with the power of aggrandize-

ment the will also has increased, it may be as well then to seek the motives which have brought about such a change in the hitherto pacific character of Nicholas.

The Revolution of July in France, and the Reform Bill in England, nearly simultaneous as to date, and similar in their tendencies, uprooted two cabinets which had been leagued in amity and peace with Russia, and gave the first shock to that feeling of confidence which had hitherto bound her to those countries. I may say two cabinets, because, though the Reform Bill was brought in by the Whigs, it was the popular clamour which called for it that unseated the Tory government, though they nominally went out on the question of the civil list. As far as England was concerned, this alteration might at first only have been considered by Russia as the unexpected coolness of an old friend who had suddenly differed in opinion upon certain topics; it might have been viewed with regret, but not with anger.

With regard to France, the change was of a more alarming nature. A friend had been expelled from his home; another was in his place, unsanctioned by the law of succession; moreover, his house was on fire, and threatened to consume those of his neighbours.

Russia, Austria, and Prussia, looked on with deep concern at the menacing aspect suddenly assumed by France, who, since 1815, had formed part of the great confederation for maintaining peace in Europe. All their old apprehensions were revived; every thing seemed to prognosticate a second career of revolutionary aggression; the war of opinion was to be decided over again; and the battle of Waterloo had been fought in vain. Urged by a wish to pacify excitement in France, and avert a collision in Europe, the allied sovereigns, stunned by this sudden blow, one after another acknowledged a ruler whom that nation professed to select as the object of its choice.

No sooner had the first crash of the tempest appeared to subside in France, and the surrounding world begun to recover from the panic, then a fresh storm broke out in Belgium, and, in defiance of all the treaties ratified at Vienna, a near ally of Russia was deprived of one half of his kingdom. Nicholas was indignant; the general alarm was increased tenfold; each turned to his neighbour, and said, "A stitch in time might have saved nine;" but no one moved, and that revolution also was accomplished,

France, in the mean time, though profess-

ing peace to all the world, was not idle; the propagandists continued their work, and, having gained their point at Brussels, set about fanning the embers of sedition wherever their insidious doctrines were likely to prevail. Every post brought the news of fresh commotions, excited by their emissaries abroad; Brunswick, Dresden, Berlin, Hesse-Darmstadt, were successively the scenes of riot and disorder, which filled the breast of every reigning sovereign with apprehension and dismay.

Mortified as the Emperor Nicholas undoubtedly was, by the territorial losses of one so nearly related to him as the King of Holland, and alarmed by the progress of the same principles in other countries, this mortification and alarm were soon turned to exasperation, when the infection had reached his own subjects, and the machinations of French propagandism had seduced the unfortunate Poles with promises of assistance, to throw off the Russian yoke, and openly declare war in support of their own independence. These promises, as we know, were in the sequel forgotten or evaded, and the insurgents left to pay the penalty of their ill-concerted revolt.

It may here not be amiss to mention that, when the incorporation of Poland with Rus-

sian empire was adjusted at the congress in 1815, the Emperor Alexander was anxious to bestow on this new portion of his subjects the boon of a very liberal constitution; but the great arbiters of the day, and particularly our Lord Castlereagh, viewed the matter in a different light, and the beneficent intentions of the Emperor were frustrated by the more absolute principles which prevailed with the other members of that assembly.

Thus deeply wounded in his interest at home, Nicholas could not be insensible to the danger without, which was hourly surrounding those powers who remained stanch and firm to the old system. The day for open hostilities had passed away; no resource was left but vigorous measures of prevention for the future; every nerve was strained to increase the military force of the empire, and bonds of amity were drawn closer between those whom a common interest united in one view of stemming the farther progress of this wide-spreading mischief. But a serious defalcation from this general league had now become apparent in a change of ministry in England, which openly announced that the objects and principles of the new cabinet were directly at variance with those which had

governed their predecessors. Lord Grey had entered into office with the device of Reform, retrenchment, and peace, engraved on his banner. Taking, perhaps, for his own interest a politic, but certainly an unfair advantage of the times, he thus flung back in the teeth of a Tory administration that long series of war and expense, which they in their time had wisely counselled, during a struggle which had fiercely menaced the vital existence of the country, and of which, when brought to a glorious conclusion, he was now ready to make a source of stigma to them, and a stepping-stone to himself.

Distress and discontent were prevalent in the country; the minds of men, tired of the old beaten track of government, were ready for any change, which either statesman or empiric might boldly suggest; the Reform Bill was carried, the rotten boroughs were abolished, the people clapped their hands and said, "We have now a fair representation in parliament, no private influence shall now again control a vote." Five years have not elapsed, and a Leviathan boroughmonger has arisen out of this mass of *purity*, who can bring in his train forty men, stout and true, to vote at his beck, and attempt the overthrow of the British constitution.

To return to foreign policy. This change in the English cabinet was, to say the least, very unwelcome to the three great powers, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. It must be obvious to all, that the Duke of Wellington, who had hitherto gone hand in hand with the sovereigns of Europe, in the great work of smoothing difficulties, and harmonizing interests, after the overthrow of Napoleon, must have inspired them with great personal friendship, as well as implicit confidence in any line of conduct which he might deem generally expedient at this momentous crisis. This tie was, moreover, strengthened by a conviction of the honesty and frankness of his character, which had become proverbial, and from which, they knew by experience, he had never swerved during the most important and intricate negotiations. It was pleasantly remarked of his Grace, by one who knew him at Vienna, that he had completely misled the most subtle diplomatists at the Congress, by always stating exactly what he really thought.

Deprived at once of this able counsellor and co-operator—finding in his place new men, novices in business, ignorant of the

state of Europe, and above all, ruled by the new-fangled ideas of the day, which it was their own object to check and keep within proper bounds, the Allied Soverigns soon discovered in England rather a partisan of revolutionary France, than the old ally, who had fought and bled in the same legitimate cause with themselves. Louis Philippe, whose new position between the republicans on one side, and the Carlists on the other, was still awfully insecure, sought eagerly the aid of the British cabinet to keep him in his seat. Independently of the weight which such a formidable power might give to his pretensions, he flattered himself that the more than liberal doctrines proclaimed by the Whigs might be palatable to one class of his new subjects; while the known aristocratic feeling which still reigns in England, independently of her ministers, might cherish a hope in the other class, that, if not a second Monck, he might still adhere to the main principles of the old monarchy. It was, in fact, the commencement of that *juste milieu* system which has since been maintained by that sovereign with so much talent, and under such peculiarly trying circumstances.

With this view, and to cement farther that

alliance, Prince Talleyrand was despatched as Ambassador to London. I remember the sensation which the arrival of that venerable statesman created in society, and not less the answer made to me by one of his friends, when I asked him the object of the Prince's mission: "He is merely come for three or four months, just to settle the Belgian Question, make a few political arrangements between the two countries, and he then will return to Paris."

Oh, Prince Talleyrand! the Belgian Question in three months!!

The proposal was then made for a conference on that subject.

It is now six years since the Representatives of Five Great Powers assembled round a table in Downing Street, to adjust a question which, from previous arrangements between the parties interested, had been already reduced into a comparatively trifling compass. No pains were spared to give all possible eclat to this scenic representation; protocol succeeded protocol in endless variety; and the dramatic effect was considerably heightened, by an English embargo on Dutch ships, and two French invasions, the whole concluding with a magnificent display of

rockets and fire-works before the citadel of Antwerp.

Here, as usual in these liberal days, the strong were marshalled against the weak; but William of Nassau remained calm and unmoved in front of his oppressors, and not a step was gained in the adjustment of the question. Tired at last with fruitless negotiations, which were at one time foiled by the wiles of Talleyrand, at another thwarted by the inconsistencies of our Foreign Secretary, the members of this conference separated in 1833, and the discussions have never since been resumed.

The altered policy of our Foreign Office was now clearly unfolded to Europe, and if Nicholas, before this elucidation, had encouraged any hope that England might oppose the progress of revolution, he had now full means to ascertain her tendency to encourage it. Wounded as he was by the harshness which, during these conferences, had been shown by her to the cause of Holland; piqued, perhaps, by cavalier allusions made to his own representatives, and foiled in his objects by the result, it is easy to account for an ominous expression, which has since been too fatally verified,

“ La Turqui maintenant sera notre Belgique.”

All parties quitted the conference with equal feelings of discontent; the irritation was, perhaps, greater on the part of Russia, but the observation dropped at the time from another official quarter, “ Ma vocation est finie, mais la provocation reste,” is indubitable proof of other disappointments.

A government which for certain objects declares war at once is sure to meet the enemy on equal terms; but a government which by its conduct only excites suspicion, which takes every opportunity of showing an inimical secret feeling, without coming to extremities, furnishes, unwarily, arms against itself; the enemy watches all its movements with a jealous eye; acts, even innocent in themselves, are misinterpreted; and when at last imperious circumstances bring on a rupture, it finds to its cost that every preparation has been made, every result anticipated, and the enemy, on his guard at all points, is ready for the conflict.

On these unequal terms shall we probably at no distant day be forced to meet Russia in the East, for her politics are changed since 1830, and her means enormously increased.

The foreign policy of our Whig government, which has been hitherto as unsuccessful in other countries as it has been inconsistent; which during the last seven years has made us almost the laughing-stock of Europe, has now, amongst other fatal mistakes, at length placed us in this position with regard to Russia and the Black Sea. The fleet at Sebastopol is always ready at the shortest notice to receive on board a division of sixteen thousand men, which is purposely cantoned in the neighbourhood. This embarkation may be completed in the space of twice twenty-four hours; the squadron may weigh anchor on the following day; and as a succession of northerly winds prevails almost constantly in the Black Sea, this expedition may, on a moderate calculation, arrive in forty-eight hours more at the mouth of the Bosphorus. We have only then to start the supposition, not very improbable, that a political difference with England, such, for instance, as the late high words about the Vixen, or a dispute of a more general nature with the Maritime Powers of Europe combined, should induce the Emperor to make this hostile demonstration. Such an expedition would arrive in five days at its desti-

nation, that is, long before the Ambassadors of France and England at the Porte could receive information of the order being issued. In the present crippled and debased state of the Turkish empire, the powers of Europe would have no chance of competing with Russia in those waters. Let a collision once take place, and the immediate result would be, the seizure of the Dardanelles, and the occupation of Constantinople by that power.

A military traveller of note, whose opinion on such subjects is entitled to great weight, has lately visited the Crimea, and published his own observations on this very interesting matter. He relates as an eye-witness the following remarks, which he made during his stay at Constantinople.

The Turks themselves have always been numerically insignificant, when compared with the population of those territories which have submitted to their sway; and their power has from that circumstance been always undefined, wavering, and precarious. Haughty and overbearing, they have never deigned to admit their trembling and despised vassals to any participation in their own grandeur; but, treating them as conquered enemies, they have unceasingly made them feel all

the caprice and tyranny of their iron yoke. This nation now presents the extraordinary picture of three millions of Turks, including both sexes, who are scattered over an immense extent of territory, intermingled with a Christian population more numerous than themselves, which is disaffected to their authority, and bordered by an Arabian population which is conscious of its own superiority.

The Ottoman empire, already weakened and dismembered by the separation of those states now ruled by Mehemet Ali, is actually reduced at the present day to the city of Constantinople, and the surrounding provinces, where the Turkish population is the most thickly concentrated. Under such disparaging circumstances it is impossible that the Grand Signior can maintain even his present precarious existence without a foreign protection; he must therefore make a virtue of necessity, and bind himself up implicitly with one of the two systems into which Europe is now divided. On the one side is Russia, on the other are the maritime powers, to which perhaps may be added Austria, forming what may be called the Western Alliance. At the first suspicion of a hostile movement

from the fleets of England and France, a Russian squadron, with twelve thousand troops on board, will arrive at the mouth of the Bosphorus; while, on the other hand, a corps of sixty thousand men will pass the Balcan and take possession of Adrianople. In the mean time the cabinets of London and Paris will become the scenes of busy negotiations; each will meet and deliberate; notes will be interchanged, menaces, loud but *not deep*, will be uttered; but before any decisive steps can be even planned in that distant quarter, the objects of Russia will be accomplished, and the straits of Constantinople irremediably closed.

The Emperor, nevertheless, is too wise, if left to himself, to accelerate a premature possession of Constantinople, which might be prejudicial to the interests of Southern Russia, inasmuch as it would interfere with the great plans of improvement, and the exploration of wealth, which are gradually being accomplished in those provinces. The only object of Russia for the moment is the free and uninterrupted navigation for herself of the Black Sea.

If the passages of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont were one or two leagues in

breadth, there are few sensible men at St. Petersburg who would really advocate the conquest of Constantinople; but as those narrow straits are absolutely the gates of an entire sea, their importance to the possessor is beyond all calculation. If the Russians once seize upon the Dardanelles, all Europe combined could never rescue them from their grasp, and as it seems indubitable that this prize must be gained by the first power which arrives on the spot, their geographical position sufficiently indicates their chance of success.

Europe then must make up her mind to view with resignation the preponderating influence of Russia at Constantinople, and to abide by the conviction that she can occupy that capital when she pleases; but at the same time let her consider that Russia has no wish to come to those extremities, unless propelled by the force of extraneous circumstances. The great object of her present policy is to defer as long as possible that conquest which is always within her reach, and which only the interference of an enemy will force her, in spite of her own interests, to accelerate.

The accuracy of this statement is undeni-

able; it is of high import to English commercial interests: but what does it prove? That Russia has for the last six years been preparing this great *dénouement*, as a counterbalancing power to the dereliction of those allies, who have wandered away from the paths of amity which, in 1815, identified the interests of the great European family, in order to follow and promote those ultra-liberal maxims, which she perhaps justly considers as hostile to her own welfare. With regard to France, as her deviation was at first the most violent and fearless, it has perhaps softened down into a policy, much more moderate and conciliating than could have been expected. Ever since the time of Cassimir Perrier, who thought he had struck all Europe with awe by sending a handful of troops to Ancona, the successive cabinets of Louis Philippe seem, whatever may have been their other inconsistencies, to have been uniformly animated with a sincere wish of maintaining peace in Europe; and however people may differ as to the merits of that sovereign, it is only justice to allow that the civilized world must owe to him an imperishable obligation on that score.

With respect to the English cabinet, much

more loud in its proclamation of the same sentiments, it seems to have taken advantage of the generally pacific feelings which existed in Europe, to provoke by its meddling policy, and its captious remonstrances, a totally different system. God knows, the Whigs did not want a war to increase their other embarrassments, but they had risen to power under formal pledges of adherence to certain popular doctrines, and they deemed it necessary, for the maintenance of their consistency, or perhaps of their places, to make their foreign policy also notorious by its bias towards what are now called liberal principles. Every one who reads a newspaper, may judge how far their interference in the affairs of Spain and Portugal has contributed to their own credit or the national glory; but, as far as our intercourse with those countries is concerned, the result has been, that, nationally speaking, we are become the objects of dislike in one, and almost of assassination in the other. When Prince Talleyrand was once asked in England the meaning of the word, *non-intervention*, which was in such daily use at the Conference, he replied,

“C’est un mot œconomique, philosophique, et politique, qui signifie à peu près interven-

tion," and that reading of the word, coming at once from such high authority, seems to have since been carefully preserved in the dictionaries of Downing Street.*

The conduct towards Russia has been different; there was no room for *non-intervention* there; but a *malus animus* was suffered to transpire, which, without giving positive offence, kept up an incessant irritation. The unpleasant discussions at the Conference—the oppression of Holland—the approbation of the Poles—the language encouraged in the House of Commons, at times breathing the most personal invectives against the Emperor, from those who were stanch supporters of the government,—the attacks in newspapers, which were openly considered its organs; in short, a war of "*coups d'épingles*," which drew no blood, but caused a fester, were all sufficient to create alarm, and excite the Emperor to take those measures of pre-

* A civil war has since broken out in Canada, and it is fortunate for English interests, that the American government has shown a more just definition of this expression than the British cabinet has done in Europe. In a proclamation just issued by Governor Tenison, of Vermont, he gives the following friendly assurance and taunting lesson to England;—"It is obvious, that, as a nation, we have no right to intermeddle with the constitution of any neighbouring power."

caution which we now see so studiously prepared against us in the East. A well known character said to me not three years ago in Paris, "Russia is your old ally, and under the Duke's government, convinced as we are of the rectitude of his intentions, and the honour of his character, there are no facilities we would not give, no sacrifices we would not make, to cement that alliance; but under your present rulers, we are every where held up to odium and suspicion, as if the conviction that you had unjustly deserted an old friend, only made you more anxious to injure and traduce her for your own justification."

It is not to be denied that with a view of courting the Anglo-Polish party in the House of Commons, and the ultra-liberal party in the country, a feeling of rancour against Russia has been openly encouraged in England by the government, as a proof of their own attachment to the cause of liberty; but this pandering to popular clamour will have cost the nation dear, if it has raised us up a formidable enemy, who only waits a convenient moment to show his resentment. A war of words is unworthy of a great nation, and it is, to say the least, impolitic to irritate the feelings of other powers, even though the *re-*

ceptions in Downing Street may have failed to conciliate their representatives.

The tranquillity which has prevailed in Europe since July, 1830, may be attributed much less to the friendly dispositions of the different cabinets, than to the awful conviction of the consequences which might result from the first cannon shot fired on the Continent. Various causes of discontent have arisen within this period, but a dread of those territorial changes, which a general conflagration might produce, has operated so strongly on all sides, that every effort has been instantly directed to sooth or repress any open demonstration of a warlike tendency. This suspicious peace, or more properly speaking, this armed truce, while it bound the powers in Europe to a strict line of inoffensive conduct towards each other, has been silently used by distant Russia, in preparing that chess-board in the East, on which her game of domination is henceforward to be skilfully played. If, in the beginning of this century, any man had ventured to predict, that in the year 1837 Russia would virtually possess the Dardanelles; would have advanced into Persia and Asia Minor; would be the mistress of a powerful

fleet in the Black Sea, ready at all times to sail into the Mediterranean; would have subjected the Polish nation; would lay her hands on the principalities; would hold Constantinople in her grasp; would have united her co-religionists against the authority of Austria, and demanded an interference in the affairs of Cracow; he would have been treated as a fool or a visionary: and yet is not this the picture which her geographical position now presents? Within the last fifteen years Russia has made more important conquests, during a time of profound peace, than any other warlike nation has made by repeated victories. One arm is placed on Persia, intent on the exclusion of British influence, the other on Turkey, one foot on Asia, the other on Poland.

Napoleon has said, “*Avant cinquante ans l’Europe sera Republicaine ou Cosaque.*” If Russia is to continue progressing as she has done, the republicans will have little chance.

The discussion of the great question, which is slowly but inevitably approaching, will show how far the English government is prepared to assert our rights, and protect our interests as strenuously as the country is entitled to expect at their hands. The commerce

of the Mediterranean is of itself an object of great importance to England, whose views are unremittingly directed to the extension of her trade and wealth. The basin of that sea is indispensable in that view, when considered as a vast harbour between three continents, the natural *entrepôt* of each, and above all, the point to which may converge the two great roads by land to our Indian possessions, formerly well known to the nations of antiquity. The one through Asia, the other through Africa. The Egyptian power, mistress of the mouths of the Nile, and of its banks to a considerable distance, may at its own pleasure either open or close the road to India through Africa; in like manner Russia either occupies now, or threatens to occupy, all the issues which lead through Asia to our Indian colonies.

The road through Africa is incontestably the most practicable,* and the most sure,—hence a good understanding with Mehemet Ali became at once a great object of policy

* Five years ago there was not a single steam-vessel of any nation plying from Egypt, now those of England, France, Austria, and Egypt, number eighteen regular opportunities to and fro every month from Alexandria. The Lloyd's Austrian Company expect to pass letters between Alexandria and London, via Trieste, in nineteen days.

for England. We winked at his aggressions on the Porte; we saw with complacency the march of Ibrahim on Constantinople; we looked to the formation of an independent kingdom at Alexandria, which would be mainly devoted to us; and therefore remained deaf to the cries of our old ally for assistance; when the sudden intervention of the Czar in the Turco-Egyptian conflict dissipated a part of these flattering delusions, and established his own influence permanently in that quarter. When at last the Russian fleet returned to Sebastopol, and a treaty of peace was made between the Sultan and his vassal, where was Old England then, with all her interests in the Levant and in Asia? Silent, in the background; while Admiral Roussin claimed for France all the merit of that interference. A change of policy on our part became necessary; we found that if we encouraged Mehemet, however privately, we must give up our intercourse with the Porte, who would then more immediately throw herself into the arms of Russia. We have ever since been placed in that embarrassing position, with both parties, which inconsistent and tortuous counsels must always produce.

The Asiatic road is longer than the African,

beset with dangers and difficulties; it is not yet accomplished; but if such a door to the commerce of Europe be one day opened, the results must be incalculable, though not unattended with jealousy on the part of England, as an approach to her colonies. On Russia alone will devolve the task of executing this work; but as the natural issue of such a communication with India must centre in the Black Sea, if England finds herself at last excluded from that navigation, all the advantage to be derived from this new intercourse with her own colonies will be lost to her, and completely monopolized by her rival. These are some of the principal motives which must compel England to maintain her superiority in the one sea, and assert her right to admission into the other: it remains to be seen how far our government is prepared to act against an adversary who has made such formidable preparations on his side.

The battle of Navarino, that sad mistake, which was afterwards qualified as an "untoward event," has crippled for ever the means of the Sultan. It was well described by a venerable English diplomatist, when he said, "It was a very good fight, but you knocked down the wrong man."

We have, it is true, on our side the famous quadrupartite treaty, an alliance which was pompously planned by M. de Talleyrand and my Lord Palmerston, as a *check to all the Northern powers*; but the Prince has retired from public life, to his chateau at Valençaye, and this eminent piece of jugglery has become a dead letter. Perhaps, during his daily drives through the forest of Gatines, that wily statesman, *qui depuis soixante ans a joué les peuples et les couronnes sur l'échiquier de l'univers*, may relax his impassable features with a smile, when he reads, in the *Journal des Debats*, a detailed account of Evan's discomfitures, and the maze of difficulties in Spain, which his last diplomatic legacy has entailed on the British cabinet.

Louis Philippe has gained all that he wanted by the English connexion; he had too much good sense to interfere seriously in Spain; and if English objects alone are to be obtained in the East, he will be equally passive. Besides, the radical tendency of our government savours too much of the doctrines which are now most strictly repressed in France, and a nearer approach to the three legitimate powers would be infinitely more gratifying to his feelings. The two other

parties, privy to that treaty, seem to have occupation enough carved out for them at home, to engross their attention, without thinking of their neighbours or allies.

Some grave politicians, who undervalue the power of Russia, and think that Messrs. Rothschild are the arbiters of peace or war, significantly allude to, what they call, her vulnerable point; they talk of her financial embarrassments, and assert that the want of money will prevent a collision.

Perhaps these reasoners are not aware that, personally, the Emperor of Russia possesses, in territorial property alone, a revenue ten times more considerable than any civil list in Europe; that, speaking financially, Russia has nothing to lose, and every thing to gain, from the moment that the seat of war is carried beyond her frontiers; besides, that her internal administration is less expensive than any other; that her levies of troops are collected with a surprising economy for the crown, and at the cost of the landed proprietors; that every military expedition once out of a country like Russia, is a speculation which can hardly fail to turn out profitable to the empire, as there is scarcely on record a treaty of peace signed

between that power and her adversaries, by which she did not ultimately gain some augmentation to her own territory.

Russia has connected herself by family ties with Prussia, Holland, and Wirtemberg, who regard her with a common feeling of interest and good will; but where is the power on the Continent to which England can now look, I will not say for support, but even for a similarity of views on any public question? Where, indeed, is the power who would not see with secret satisfaction any diminution of her glory, or any wound to her interests? Our poor old friend, Holland, is alienated for ever; all Germany views us with distrust, and is, up to this moment, actively engaged in thwarting our commerce, by a line of custom-houses, which is the only warfare that circumstances will permit. Austria, perhaps, is jealous of Russia, but she is occupied with the care of her Italian provinces, and can have no one feeling in common with a government which encourages and promotes civil war. In addition to her three family alliances, it is evident that Russia has of late been tampering with the United States, who would readily be gained by the lure of an island in the Archipelago, that great ob-

ject of their ambition, as a store-house for their goods, and a haven of refuge for their shipping, to become a formidable maritime ally of that power.

Pursuing then the hypothesis of a general collision, we may imagine Russia in full possession of Constantinople, leagued with Prussia, which forms a *tête du pont* upon France, threatening with her advanced guard the gates of Vienna, through Galicia, and her fleets re-enforced by those of Holland and America; we shall then allow that a long train of preparations, skilfully combined, may place the interests of Europe, and more particularly of England, in singular jeopardy.

A new system of the world seems gradually preparing to unfold itself. The destruction of that great league which was signed at Vienna in 1815, now accomplished by the secession of England and France, has given new views and objects to the other powers. There are three nations, Prussia, Wirtemberg, and Bavaria, which seem geographically to interfere with each other. What power can England 'now possess of interposing there, or calming the ambition of those states, while Russia has already established an influence which may one day

make her the supreme arbiter of any disputes that may arise between them. On the other hand, Austria, it is true, might support the interests of her ally, Bavaria; but the wary policy of that government, which prompts her to secure a safe retreat for herself when the storm approaches, will, doubtless, be met by Russia with a project of dismemberment, which shall assign to each a convenient share in the European provinces of the Ottoman empire. If the partition of Turkey shall take place soon after the occupation of Constantinople, which, in an age like this, when any event is on the cards, cannot be deemed improbable, here is Austria at once detached from the Maritime powers, and ready to advocate the policy of Russia.

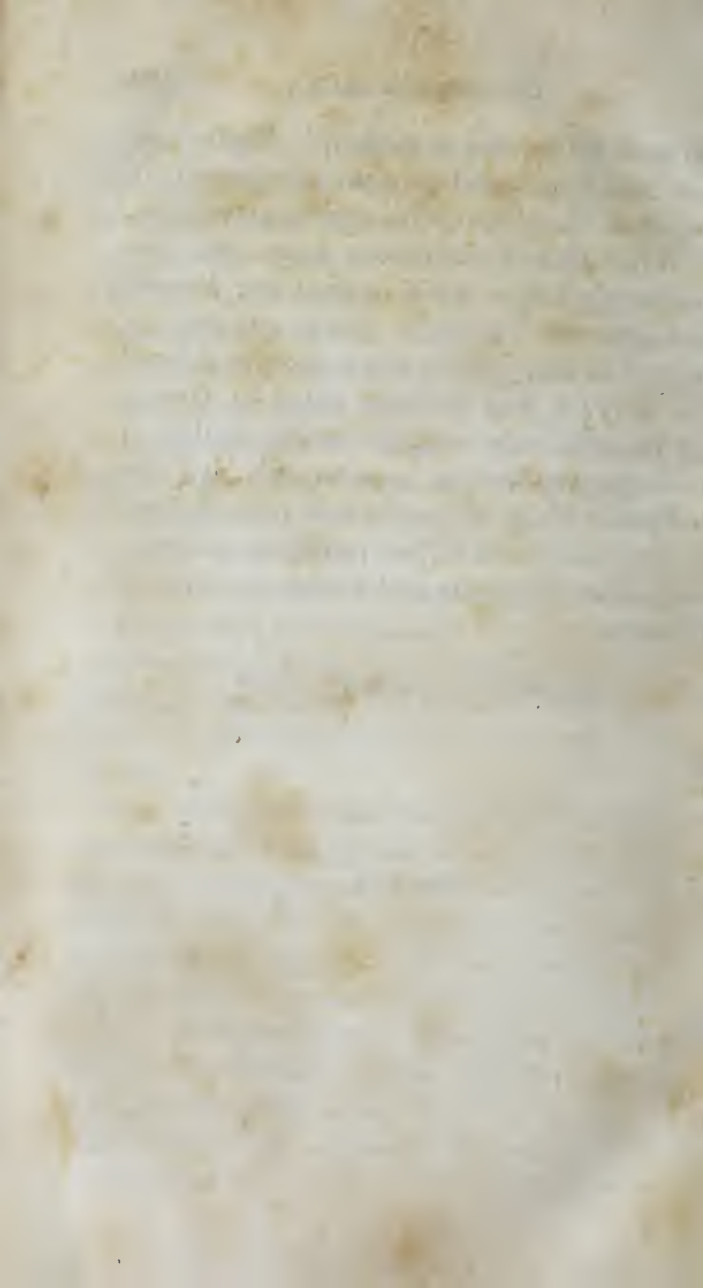
The solution of this grand problem, whether deferred by negotiation, or accelerated by some unforeseen event, is ultimately inevitable; and who will venture to assert, that in this advanced stage it can be arranged by pacific means, at least, in the Archipelago or the Mediterranean? The great cry has been raised throughout the British empire, that our commercial and maritime power is openly menaced: a foreign rival has dared to say on that sea, which is common to all, “so

far shall ye go, and no farther.” The nation has been threatened on that element which has been the scene of her constant triumphs.

While these humiliations have been preparing *de longue main* against our honour and interests abroad, a pitiful economy at home has been paring down the supplies of our navy; a loan has been voted to Greece for Russian purposes, and near a million of money squandered in promoting a civil war in Spain; which of itself would have sufficed to place our fleets in an imposing attitude, to enforce our rights, and avenge our injured dignity.

Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.

THE END.





1564-577

